ESSAYS IN BRIEF FOR WAR-TIME

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ESSAYS IN BRIEF FOR WAR-TIME

BY

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TO

A GOOD FRIEND AND A GOOD LISTENER

LADY MARY KIDD

NOTE.

THESE little papers were nearly all written during the early stress of the battle at Verdun, and helped to carry me through the strain of that very critical time. I have on this account added the dates of their composition. I do not suppose that they will find more than a few readers; but friends have liked to hear them read aloud, and may wish to read them to others. They are very short, for I have tried not to waste a single word, and printing is now an expensive process.

W. W. F.

KINGHAM,
June 22, 1916.

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Good Thoughts in Bad Times

(Thomas Fuller)

THOMAS FULLER, one of the best and wisest and wittiest of Englishmen, a peace-loving man of a most happy temperament, spent the last twenty years of his life amid the trials and terrors of civil war, and the defeat and oppression of the cause which he believed to be the righteous one. He was a man with a pen ever in his hand, and a full flow of fancy in his brain: and when our civil war began in 1642, his pen was quickly at work noting down his thoughts in the brief and telling form which his curious fancy gave them. In 1645 he published 'Good Thoughts in Bad Times' at Exeter: in 1647 his 'Good Thoughts in Worse Times': and in 1660 his 'Mixed Contemplations in Better times,' dedicated to Lady Monck, in which dedication he says that she was known to have had 'a finger, yea a hand, yea an arm happily instrumental' in the great work of her renowned husband effected early that year. These three little books were reprinted by Pickering in 1830, and a copy of this reprint was given to me in 1893 by the best of

all my friends, who is no longer with me to look into its pages for aid or refreshment in our Bad Times of to-day.

Fuller's Thoughts are really good thoughts: they are full of good will to friends and foes alike. Civil wars are said to engender worse passions than other wars, but there is no harshness, no bitterness here: no excessive blaming of his own side or the other, such as we grow weary of to-day. I find nothing more than here and there a very mild reproach, yet usually one with a stimulating prick in it. 'I could heartily wish,' he says, 'that all pretenders to reformation would first labour to be good themselves, before they go about the amending of others.' And in true accordance with his own precept, he is a stern and constant self-critic.

And when the long trouble came to an end, he touches on his happiness very gently: for him it is not the triumph of a party, but recovery from a disease afflicting the whole community. The following 'thought' will give a good idea of his mellow tone and gentle manner: he heads it 'Eyes bad, not object.'

'I looked upon the wrong or back side of a piece of arras; it seemed to me as a continued nonsense, there was neither head nor foot therein, confusion itself had as much method in it: a company of thrums and threads, with many pieces and patches of several sorts, sizes and colours, all which signified nothing to my understanding.

'But then looking on the reverse, or right side thereof, all put together did spell excellent proportions and figures of men and cities. So that indeed it was a history, not wrote with a pen, but wrought with a needle.

'If men look upon our late times with a mere eye of reason, they will hardly find any sense therein, such their huddle and disorder. But alas, the wrong side is objected to our eyes, whilst the right side is presented to the high God of heaven, who knoweth that an admirable order doth result out of this confusion, and what is presented to him at present may hereafter be so showed to us as to convince our judgements in the truth thereof.'

From hardness of heart and harshness of judgement Fuller was saved, I think, not only by his religion and his constant watching over himself, but also by his sense of humour. There is a delightful example of this near the end of the little book, a 'thought' entitled 'Keep your Castle.' It shows how deeply he had felt the power of his enemies in the old days, and how little he resents their harsh dealings now that better times have come. In the deadly struggle of to-day, can we expect to keep our native sense of humour? Are the Germans teaching us to lose it, to see nothing but hard and bitter strife before us, and to hate our enemies? I do not think that either navy or army will entirely lose it, but the nation, led by the Press, may be apt to do so. No wonder: but the pity will be great.

Fuller tells in 'Keep your Castle,' that soon after King Charles' execution he preached in a church near London, and said in his prayer, 'God in His due time settle the nation *on the true foundation thereof.*' A great man (he conceals the name) was present, one of those then in power, who scented sedition in the phrase 'the true foundation thereof,' and afterwards cross-examined the preacher, but with little effect: he was clever enough to slip through the toils. Fuller's comment, written so many years afterwards when all was safe, may have a little sting in it, but should have tickled even the Puritan inquisitor:

'When men come with nets in their ears it is good for the preacher to have neither fish nor fowl in his tongue. But, blessed be God, we need not now lie at so close a guard. Let the gentleman now know, that what he suspected I then intended in my words, and let him make what improvement he pleaseth thereof.'

January 31st, 1916.

A Good Word for England

Last Christmas Day a friend in Lausanne wrote me a letter which I keep as a prize. He is a friend whom I have never seen, and perhaps never shall see; but we have become firm friends by correspondence, and I seem to myself to recognise in him a simple, honest, loving soul, full of years and full of sorrows. The last sorrow was the loss of a great-nephew, a boy hardly eighteen, who left Cambridge suddenly, enlisted in the French Army, and was killed in the recent fighting in Champagne.

In his Christmas letter my friend has a few words about England which I will transcribe in his own French:

'Je voudrais pouvoir vous dire toute l'admiration que j'ai pour l'Angleterre. Dans quel autre pays aurait-on trouvé des millions de voluntaires en si peu de temps? Pas même en France. Certes la France offre un bel exemple de patiente énergie. Mais elle avait une injure à venger: elle a des provinces occupées à délivrer. Tandis que l'Angleterre ne nourissait aucun sentiment semblable contre aucune nation. Les Allemands ont beau dire, l'Angleterre combat pour les autres plus que pour elle-même! Elle verse pour eux, avec prodigalité,

son sang et son or. Et quand je pense au rôle qu'elle joue dans le monde, il me revient à la mémoire le beau passage de Milton que tout Anglais, je crois, sait par coeur: Methinks I see a great and puissant nation . . .'

I keep this passage in the French, for it might almost hurt an Englishman to find the praises of his land staring him in the face in his own tongue, especially at a time when he seems bent on making the worst of himself. In spite of an exception here and there, which usually meets with its just recompense, as in the scathing ridicule of 'Podsnappery' by Dickens, we are curiously *un*-self-conscious as a nation. We think little about our national greatness or the principles (if any) on which it is built: Milton's lofty sentences, familiar to my Swiss friend, are to most of us quite unknown.

This want of self-consciousness, which we prize so highly in the individual, must have some value in a nation. It is not difficult to explain, and it can itself explain many things. We have never really had to fight for our very existence, and such a stress as that is needed to quicken the pulse of a people, to make them realise themselves. Again, there is a certain wholesome antagonism of feeling between the several parts and populations of the United Kingdom, which has kept us free from any acute attack of nationalism. And now we are becoming merged in a form of polity much more hopeful for civilisation than that of nationality, of which we are now

realising the danger. We are the brothers of Canadians, Australians, Boers, Indians. The Germans fancy that we rule over subject races and drain their life-blood: but they think their own nationalism into our imperialism.

By this same absence of self-consciousness we can also explain much that our British critics have long been branding as national ineptitude. We have suddenly been forced to realise ourselves, and to strain every muscle of the national frame. Something may be forgiven us if we have been slow at this awakening, for such strain has never happened to us before. When have we been roused to real national enthusiasm against an enemy for more than a momentary indignation? Not the Armada, nor the Dutch in the Medway, nor the imminence of invasion by 'Boney' for a whole year, wrought in us any such temper as might be called hatred. Now for the first time the enemy is teaching us to hate him. He could hardly do us greater damage, and it is hard to see how we can escape it. The mischief is getting beyond the saving power of a merciful sense of humour. That sense and a national self-consciousness cannot play in tune together.

But as yet we may say that one curious result of our want of self-consciousness has not departed from among us: I mean that almost painful dislike of self-praise to which I alluded just now. I believe that my Swiss friend's words will be received with suspicion by most of those who happen to read these

lines. Have not the press, the platform, the pulpit, been telling us for months that we are deficient in almost every quality that 'a great and puissant nation' should own?

Yet if any honest Briton will read my friend's words and think about them, I believe that in his heart of hearts he will confess that they tell the truth, if not the whole truth. It is entirely true that we have nursed no feeling of animosity against any nation. It is in the main true that we are fighting for others rather than for ourselves—for civilisation rather than for nationality. And beyond doubt it is true that we have done what was never done in the world before; up to this fourth day of February, 1916, we have had neither soldier nor sailor fighting for us who has not risked his life of his own free will, and these willing servants of a great cause are now reckoned by millions.

I think it is as well that we should know how these things appear to a friendly foreigner; but at the same time it is still better that we should not think too much about it. Let us keep my friend's welcome words for the next Zeppelin raid, or any hour of inevitable sadness. There is far too much proud boasting abroad in Europe just now, and of all the dangers that victory can bring us, I know none that would be more serious than the contagion of that *ὕβρις*.

FEBRUARY 4TH.

News from a Region of Peace

One of the last pupils with whom Oxford has enriched my life was a quiet youth of no great mark, one who did his duty without over-doing it, somewhat plain in appearance and blunt of speech, well liked in college, but not a hero. I had long ago discovered that beneath the surface of these seemingly ordinary men there is often precious ore lying ready for the seeker. This was a man whom every honest dog would love: and that is saying a good deal for him, though I might find it hard to say why. He came to stay with us at Kingham more than once, and the friendship with me extended itself warmly to my sister,—another point to his credit. I only wish I could see his honest face here enjoying the sunshine, as he used dearly to enjoy it, this early spring morning. But he has disappeared, not indeed to the war, though he was an ardent soldier at Oxford and would fain be at the front at this moment, but to take up work for England and civilisation in a far corner of British East Africa.

As I think him over, fancying that I hear his voice interrogating me in a way that sensitive people

might possibly find abrupt, he seems to me a good example of that absence of self-consciousness which I noted in the last paper. And as a few days ago we had a long letter from him, written from a spot which is hardly to be found except in the latest maps, I shall set some part of it down here, to help bear out my contention. But let me just say that if the reader will turn to any tolerable map of Africa and find out the exact position of Mount Kenia, he will be able to fix the position of the writer at about half-way between that great snowclad peak and the vast equatorial lake of Victoria Nyanza. Here a great plain, or valley of huge dimensions, runs north and south, dividing the great mountain and its neighbours from another ridge which hides them from the lake. It is on this ridge that my old pupil has his habitation, looking eastward over the plain. I should add that he served his apprenticeship among that once formidable people, the Masai, a fine race, whom he soon learnt to respect.

'I have been in this district nearly two years. When I returned home I went back to the Masai, to my great satisfaction, but I had not even unpacked when the man in charge here was killed and I had to come in his place. That meant another 300 mile trek, so it was May before I got settled here. It is a most extraordinary place. My district consists practically of a single escarpment,—almost precipitous in most parts, about sixty miles long, and the natives, called Masahmet, live actually on

the side of it: their huts being perched on narrow ledges, either natural or dug out of the rocks, while their fields are either at the top or bottom. The escarpment is four to five thousand feet high, and is really a portion of the eastern wall of the great Rift valley, about two hundred miles north of Naivasha. The Government station is at the top. I look right across the "valley," and in the early morning can see quite distinctly the snow peak of Mount Kenia, more than one hundred and fifty miles away in the east. I had exactly the same view of it from a station I was at last tour: from here it is almost as distinct, but of course very much smaller, and the effect is rather odd; I always have the feeling of looking at it through the wrong end of a telescope.

'The top of the escarpment is not flat, and though the station is at the top of it, it is also at the foot of a range of mountains which rise to eleven thousand feet and surround it on three sides. The hills are covered with dense forest, and the scenery deserves the term "magnificent," I think. The natives were rather wild when I came, as the district had only been opened up two years before. I don't think they have more than the average amount of original sin, but they were comparatively inaccessible, and they had lived for years in dread of, and in experience of, attacks from two powerful tribes on either side of them. The result was a mixture of truculence and timidity which made them resist the advances of the Government for some time.

Now they don't give much trouble, and turn out to be really rather a jolly, hard-working and law-abiding lot, according to their own notions, and in consequence there is not much to do. I have been struggling with the language for some time, but cannot say I have really mastered it yet. I have also found an occupation in road-making. You may imagine that in this rough country the communications are not very good, so I began about eight months ago on a graded road to the next station nearer civilisation, and am still working on it. The labour has to be provided by the natives for nothing, as I have no money for it. Each section comes and works for a day occasionally, and in this way it is gradually nearing completion. The work is mostly in the forest and is rather fascinating. It really gives one some satisfaction to see a road you could cycle or motor on evolving from an absolutely impassable forest.

'I don't get many visitors. I haven't seen a white face since the beginning of September (he writes on December 10th, 1915): but in July the magistrate from the next district spent a day with me, and noticing "Kingham Old and New" in my bookshelf, told me he knew that country well . . .

'I am very well, and should be perfectly contented in my hermitage, were it not for the feeling that there is more important work to be done just now than merely keeping an eye on a few thousand natives.'

I will not comment on this letter, except to express

a doubt whether its last sentence is really true. In his complete lack of self-consciousness he does not realise the value of the work he is doing in his solitude.

February 5th.

A Bad Word for England

'ENGLAND has always been ready to lend a hand to crush liberty, to perpetuate abuses, and to rivet the fetters of monarchical, feudal, and ecclesiastical tyranny!'

This astonishing statement was not written by a German, nor by any foreigner, but by an officer of the British Army in the year 1817. It occurs in a book called 'After Waterloo,' published in 1907 from a manuscript discovered in Paris, where the writer spent his last years, and edited by the eminent savant M. Salomon Reinach. With questionable taste M. Reinach has quoted these words, and others quite as startling, in his preface, so that the reader of what is in some ways an interesting volume may be prepared for the almost rancorous detestation of his own country in which Major Frye joyously indulges at every opportunity. Though we do not much relish being praised, we assuredly do not enjoy being cursed: more especially when we are accused of putting our whole weight in the scale of oppression and obscurantism, of protecting 'kingcraft and priestcraft,' to use the Major's own terms, and of

fighting against the liberties of Europe, for which we imagined that we had so often struggled, not only on the sea, but in Spain, France, and Flanders.

Seeing that there can hardly be any question that we are at the present moment really fighting for the liberties of Europe, and that only a century has elapsed since in Major Frye's opinion we were doing the exact opposite, it seems worth while to make a brief comment on his verdict against us. The good Major was quite honest and quite in earnest: but what did he mean?

As a young man he had been roused to enthusiasm by the French Revolution, like so many others, nay, like most Englishmen faithful to the traditions of their race. He was still a boy when the worst horrors of Parisian anarchy were over, and the Republic began to pull itself together for its work of regenerating Europe. Then France became for him the ideal country, and the young Napoleon a romance. At Eton, where he spent the years 1797-9, the years of the 'rebellion' in Ireland, and of repression in England and Scotland of all revolutionary symptoms, his perfectly honest feeling was accentuated by foolish opposition. He says that the boys were drilled in 'strong aristocratic principles and hatred of democracy and of the French in particular.'

How he came to join the British Army we do not know: probably it was impossible for him to resist the family pressure at the tender age of fifteen. In 1801 he was with Abercrombie in Egypt, and never

forgot the admirable work done there by Napoleon, who was organising Egypt with a view to the conquest of India. After this he was himself in India for some years, during which Napoleonism rose to its highest point, and then began to show its true quality. Far away in India and Ceylon, Major Frye knew nothing of the hypnotising of France, the subjugation of Germany, the attempt to hold down Spain by military force: or of the root fault of Napoleonism, itself a legacy from the Revolution, the delusion that nations ought to be made by force to accept the blessings which you are confident you can bestow upon them. It is the same delusion as that which is Germany's only reasonable excuse for herself in the present war.

When the Major returned home he found Napoleonism ruined and reaction setting in. But long absence had not quenched his enthusiasm; he was still very young, and Napoleonism was still a romantic ideal in a mind not too well versed in the knowledge of history and politics. After Waterloo he travelled in Europe for two years, nursing bitter hatred against England and Prussia for the destruction of his ideal, and seeing everything through French, or rather Napoleonic spectacles. The state of his mind may be judged from the fact that he deliberately defends Napoleon for robbing the art treasures of his conquered countries, on the ground that they were a proper tribute to the superior qualities of the chosen people. Again, he defies his reader (not

knowing, however, whether there would ever be one) to find a single instance of misconduct by a French soldier in all the many years of war: forgetting, or not knowing, that Napoleon's system, as explained *e.g.* by his own General Marbot, was to feed his armies on the countries they marched through, thus saving himself the cost and trouble of a commissariat.

Thus for Major Frye England was on the wrong side, and he would have no more to do with her. He was too hard on his own country, for in the settlement of Europe after Waterloo, though many mistakes were made, English plenipotentiaries were by no means the worst offenders. Still, there was much reason to regret that our statesmen were not more willing and able to nurse such seeds of liberty as had been dropped in Europe during the previous thirty years. But the Major went much too far in his denunciation. The words I quoted at the head of this paper may apply to England under the sinister influence of George III and his worthless successor, but even for that unfortunate period they are in need of much qualification. And in spite of many back-currents, much indifference, and perhaps some hypocrisy, our influence in the world as a nation has been on the side of liberty—liberty for a people to choose its rulers, to work out its own way of life and growth, to follow its own religious ideas and practice. And last, not least, the suppression of the slave trade all the world over, which has taken us nearly a century

to work out, has been our work entirely—a greater glory for the British Navy than either the Nile or Trafalgar.

It is well, then, while we try to draw such profit as we can from the bitter words of an English soldier, or those of a great man like Byron, who had the same feeling about us, to be quite clear what they mean. The more we think back with a view to finding this out, the more we shall see that our record is not by any means a clean one, even in our dealings with the principle of liberty. But we must see to it that after this war that record shall be absolutely unstained. We must make up our minds, at the cost of all class prejudice or political bias, to deserve the bracing tribute of our present Poet Laureate, than whom no more true-hearted or right-minded Englishman can to-day be found:

'Britons have ever fought well for their country, and their country's Cause is the high Cause of Freedom and Honour. The fairest earthly fame, the fame of Freedom, is inseparable from the names of Albion, Britain, England: it has gone out to America and the Antipodes, hallowing the names of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand: it has found a new home in Africa: and this heritage is our glory and happiness. We can therefore be happy in our sorrows, happy even in the death of our beloved who fall in the fight; for they die nobly, as heroes and saints die, with hearts and hands unstained by hatred or wrong.'

A Bad Word for England

Opening at hazard the Anthology from the preface to which I have taken these words, I light upon some famous words of Burke to the same effect (he is speaking of the Colonies):

'Slavery they can have anywhere. It is a weed that grows on every soil. They may have it from Spain, they may have it from Prussia. But until you become lost to all feeling of your true interest and your natural dignity, freedom they can have from none but you. This is the commodity of price of which you have the monopoly.'

FEBRUARY 8TH.

South Germany in 1772

(Dr. Burney)

Dr. Charles Burney, father of 'Evelina,' friend of Johnson and his circle, a man greatly loved by all who knew him, planned a great history of Music in the early years of the reign of George III, and in 1770 found himself compelled to collect material for it in Italy, where he thoroughly enjoyed himself. He was a man of infinite good humour and vivacity, no dull plodder: and where he could speak the language, as in France or Italy, no traveller was ever happier. I have just been looking at his portrait by Sir Joshua. It is a very pleasant face to gaze at, with lustrous eyes full of intelligence and humour. Vivacity was the family characteristic: there is not a dull eye among all the portraits of his sons and daughters.

After writing a successful account of his Italian experiences, Dr. Burney carried his researches into Germany in 1772, and the following year published two volumes which at this moment are of rather special interest. The first of these gives us a fair idea

of the condition of southern Germany before it was roused from a self-satisfied torpor by the French Revolution and Napoleon. Incidentally it helps us to understand the gradually acquired force of national feeling in South Germany, which under Prussian influence has been so potent a factor in European politics since 1870; for though owing much to Napoleon, and intensely disliking Prussia, the South Germans never could become French in feeling. Napoleon destroyed the prestige of their Electoral and Ducal Courts, and quite unwittingly sowed the seeds of true Germanism, an unknown plant before his time. From Burney we learn that even in music there was no real German quality in South Germany, including Austria, in 1772, and this is fully borne out by the letters of Mozart and his father, which extend from about 1770 to 1785. What there was, as we shall see, was mainly Italian.

The Doctor did not enjoy himself in this travel as he did in Italy: but this was partly due to his want of proficiency in German. It was, however, also due to the slowness and dullness of the people, and their insistence on etiquette with strangers. '*Festina lente* seems here a favourite motto. It was necessary to visit the first day, and to be visited the second: and on the third there was some chance, but no certainty, of obtaining the favour I required . . . If in the morning I had explained as clearly as I could the object of my journey, to a man of letters, a librarian, or a musician, it was common for that

individual in the evening to say, "The History of Music, I think you are going to write, hum, ay . . . the History of Music, hum . . . well, and what do you wish I should do for you?" Here I was forced, in a painful Da Capo, to tell my story all over again.' The travelling, too, was rough and painful; the roads and carriages were abominable, the inns bad and predaceous; and finally, during a voyage on a raft down the Danube to Vienna, the poor Doctor led such a life of misery and starvation that he must have been a healthy subject to escape without damage.

The centres of 'Kultur' in this backward region of Europe were not the imperial cities, but the Courts of the Electors of the Empire. Our traveller visited three of these in succession, and in two out of the three instances he found them at small new towns, where quiet and privacy could be enjoyed by the electoral family and its numerous belongings. The Elector Palatine, whose passion was music, squeezed his subjects for the sake of his famous orchestra, which delighted the young Mozart four years later, and in summer filled the small town of Schwetzingen with a population of musicians. But we are not to fancy that these were Germans: far from it. They were mainly Italians; and the gardens were laid out in the French style; and the operas were French or Italian. All, in fact, was as entirely foreign to the native genius of the country as music was in England in the early Victorian period. As for the Duke

of Würtemburg, who preferred the small Ludwigsburg to the big Stuttgart, Dr. Burney reports that his passion for music was carried to such excess as to ruin both his country and people: he even compares him to Nero. 'It is, perhaps, on such occasions as these that music becomes a vice, and hurtful to society; for that nation, of which half the subjects are stage-players, fiddlers, and soldiers, and the other half beggars, seems to be but ill governed.'

So far as he was able to get into contact with the common people, Burney does not seem to have been struck with their musical capacity. What has made Germany the home of music? In the south, mainly the influence of the Courts: in the north, that of the Church. These two educational forces have done much for a people who, as I have been long convinced, do not naturally find the expression of their feelings in music, and are not gifted with delicacy of ear. Even in the Leipsic of that day Burney noticed that every singer at the opera—not Italians but Germans—sang out of tune: and this falls in with my own experience of German singing, always excepting the very best. It is perhaps hardly fair to mention German bands in England: but I have often wondered whether the natives of any other country could so stolidly endure to play out of tune all day long for a whole summer. Nor is it only the strolling performers who thus torment their hearers; I once had to go on board a German liner at

Southampton, and there was the inevitable band, unconsciously but painfully dissonant.

And yet, as Dr. Burney discovered at Munich, there were then in Bavaria and Austria many schools of music, in which boys were taught to sing and play some instrument. At Munich the Jesuits had charge of these: elsewhere the Courts: and in Bohemia, Hungary, and Austria (in the minor sense of the term) music was taught in all the common 'reading' schools. Our Doctor has some interesting remarks on these schools and their musical results in his second volume, pp. 23 and 24.

'I shall only say that in general the performance of the scholars was rude and coarse, and that perfection seems never aimed at among them. . . . Upon the whole it is manifest from these schools that it is not nature but cultivation which makes music so generally understood by the Germans: and it has been said by an accurate observer of human nature, who has long resided among them, that "if innate genius exists, Germany certainly is not the seat of it: though it must be allowed to be the seat of perseverance and application."'

In Vienna, Burney made acquaintance with the one living German composer of real original genius who was then in the zenith of his powers: for Mozart was still a boy, and Haydn was not a German but a Slav. All that he tells us about Gluck is of the very greatest interest; but it has long ago been embodied in biographies and dictionaries of

music, and I need not dwell on it here. In another paper I propose to follow our English traveller northwards to the home of the great Bach and the Prussia of the great Frederic.

February 18th.

Berlin and Frederic in 1772

(Dr. Burney)

Dr. Burney's second volume, which tells the story of his sojourn in Prussia, is even more interesting than his first, and it is strange that Carlyle should not have made any good use of it in his 'Frederic the Great.' Apparently the 'last of the Kings,' as performer and composer, did not much interest his grim biographer.

The Seven Years War had been followed by some years of wholesome peace: but it had left its mark on all the towns through which the Doctor journeyed. At Prague he found the inhabitants still at work through the city repairing the Prussian devastations, particularly at the cathedral and imperial palace, which were both entirely demolished. At Dresden the same work was going on, and suggested the remark, that though Frederic ruined many a noble city, he never took one by a regular siege. The Frauenkirche, where there was good music, escaped the King's shells by reason of the orbicular form of its dome: 'but he succeeded better in five

or six other churches, which he totally demolished.' Prussian history seems to repeat itself.

After another miserable journey by boat and 'Postwagen,' (in which conveyance he describes himself as being rather kicked than driven from place to place), our traveller approached Berlin: but here the driver lost his way and landed him in a bog, where during a night of wind and cold rain they had to remain shelterless; and even after reaching the city-gate long official delays detained him in his wet clothes, and in a most forlorn condition.

But at Berlin he found much to interest him, and has passed it on to us very pleasantly. He found himself in an atmosphere very different from that of the sleepy South German courts. Here the great drill-master Frederic was supreme over the lives, wills, tastes, and pursuits, of his subjects, and neither he nor they could see any reason why it should not be so. It was the inherited tradition of Prussia, as it still is, though in a wider sense. I have found Dr Burney really useful in helping me to understand the ideas at the root of Prussian monarchism,—more useful even than Carlyle, who overdoes the case for his hero. But I do not know that I ever learnt so much about those ideas in a couple of pages, as in contemplating (as I often used to for the mere ludicrousness of it) the dedication to his King and former pupil prefixed to his treatise on the flute by the once famous Joachim Quantz.

I picked up this book in a London shop long ago:

it is a quarto, in antique German black letter. The dedication starts at the top of a page in enormous letters, and in tremendous words that express the immense and unlimited all-mightiness of the Master and King: I have never seen any address to a deity that could compare with it for awesomeness. Then follow, in gradually lessening type, the endless titles of this mighty superman, with an overflow which occupies, in still diminishing letters, the whole of the next page. At the bottom of this page the author begins to describe himself, in type of the smallest and meanest size, as His Majesty's submissive, humble, obedient, abject servant (Knecht), Quantz. He puts no initials to his name: he prints that name in the extreme bottom corner of the page, and in type so small that the printers must have been hard put to it to satisfy him. To us all this is in the last degree ludicrous; but to poor Quantz and his august Master it was, I imagine, very proper and appropriate.

But Frederic valued his Quantz very highly as a musician, and made him write three hundred concertos for the flute, three of which our Doctor had the felicity of hearing at Potsdam, played by his sacred Majesty himself. He played no other concertos,—so the old composer told Burney,—and took the three hundred in rotation! The Doctor's comment on this is amusing: 'this exclusive attachment to the productions of his old master may appear somewhat contracted: however, it implies a

constancy of disposition but rarely to be found among princes.' His comment on the royal performance is very flattering: and suggests that Prussian monarchs, then as now, have mysterious powers of hypnotising those who approach them. But as Frederic had been constantly practising his flute for nearly forty years, with all the persistence of his nature, and was himself a composer of such concertos, we shall do well to accept the doctor's estimate. Perseverance had made the King into a musician, as it might have made him into a painter or a shoemaker. I recently heard one of his concertos well performed at Oxford: it was clear, 'nett gemacht', but not in the least interesting.

Dr Burney's summing-up of the musical situation in Berlin, which throws much light on the atmosphere of the city as a whole, is worth quoting in full:

'The music of this country is more truly German than that of any other part of the empire; for though there are Italian operas here in carnival time, his Prussian majesty will suffer none to be performed but those of Graun, Agricola, or Hasse, and of this last and best, very few. And in the opera house, as in the field, his majesty is such a rigid disciplinarian, that if a mistake is made in a single movement, he immediately marks and rebukes the offender: and if any of his Italians dare to deviate from strict discipline by adding, altering, or diminishing a single passage in the parts they have to

perform, an order is sent from the King for them to adhere strictly to the notes written by the composer, at their peril. This, when compositions are good, and a singer is licentious, may be an excellent method, but certainly shuts out all taste and refinement. So that music is truly stationary in this country, his majesty allowing no more liberty in that, than he does in civil matters of government: not contented with being sole monarch of the lives, fortunes, and business of his subjects, he even prescribes rules to their most innocent pleasures.'

From the confined atmosphere of Berlin our traveller went on to the free city of Hamburg, where he met with a musician of real genius, a plant very different from the withered old stalks of Frederic's cultivation. There is nothing so interesting in all these musical travels as his talks with Carl Philip Emanuel Bach, the gifted son of the greatest composer ever produced in northern Cermany. We read with astonishment that this man had lived in Berlin for thirty years without being honoured by any attention from his majesty,—because he did not play or write for the flute. Bach had a soul above the flute, like his great father: of whom it is clear that Frederic knew little and cared less. Dr Burney cannot refrain from aiming a parting shaft at this autocrat, who in other matters was reckoned as the greatest man of his time:

'His Majesty having early attached himself to an instrument which, from its confined powers, has had

less good music composed for it than any other in common use, was unwilling perhaps to encourage a boldness and variety in composition, which his instrument would not allow him to participate.'

FEBRUARY 21ST.

The New Tyrannis

Turning over yesterday the once familiar pages of old Herodotus, in which every human being seems wondrously endowed with life, in a setting of no less marvellous reality, I met with some brilliant figures who were at one time constantly in my mind. There is something most attractively magnificent about the great tyrants of Greece as they act or speak in the pages of Herodotus; the colours of their portraits will never fade.

Contemplating these portraits again after a long interval, I found it not so easy to say whether, in Herodotean idiom, the men whom they represent were 'more good or more bad.' They seem unwilling to be judged by any ordinary standard of morality —Polycrates, Periander, Gelo, and the rest; they are responsible to no man, and seem to create a moral standard of their own. It is clear that they were usually quite indifferent to the feelings of their subjects, whom they treated as if they were a stock of animals on a farm, to be used for farm purposes without much compunction, or to be got rid of if they were superfluous or dangerous, as Polycrates got rid of his

Samian oligarchs in one of Herodotus' most valuable stories. Yet the farm itself was often well cared for by the tyrant; he would make a great commercial undertaking of it, and with the profits he would fit it out with fine buildings and works of art, and with an excellent supply of food and water. If we had his records and accounts, we should probably find that his organisation was praiseworthy; and if his people could only have given up their absurd fancy to be treated as human beings with wills of their own, he would have enjoyed both happiness and security.

The portraits of these abnormal men can hardly fail at this critical moment to bring to mind the one figure in the Europe of to-day that can fairly be compared with them. Can anything be gained by such a comparison? Can we learn anything from it about the present peril of Europe?

One point is at once clear to me, and it is a point of difference. The irresponsible power of the Greek tyrant placed him *outside* the conscience and tradition of his State. 'The best man in the world,' says Herodotus, 'in such a position, will find himself outside the pale of the ideas in which he has been trained.' This dictum is true, on the whole, of the two greatest tyrants of modern Europe. Louis XIV, placed in this position by Richelieu and kept in it by Mazarin, ceased to think or act within the pale of French ideas, political or social; and like the Greek tyrant, he treated his kingdom as a farm and his people as the stock upon it, differing however from

most of his prototypes in being a very bad farmer. In this last capacity Napoleon was far better; he had in fact a wonderful genius for farming. France owes him a great debt; yet it may be doubted whether as a foreigner he was ever really in touch with the best French spirit, as we see it for example to-day, and in his dealings with the rest of Europe he was a real tyrant. So thought our wise poet, Wordsworth, whom we are learning to think of also as a statesman, and expressed his feelings resonantly in his sonnets of 1810, and especially in the last of the series, written in 1811.

Now the difference between all these ancient and modern tyrants on the one hand, and William II of Germany, on the other, is obvious at once. The Kaiser does *not* stand outside the pale of the ideas in which he has been trained: far from it. He is at once the natural result, and the most perfect expression, of the traditions and forces which for more than two centuries have been making what we call Prussianism. By these forces, as if on the crest of a huge irresistible wave, he has been carried to his present practically irresponsible position. He violates no Prussian principle; he has laboured for good administration at home, and aggressive advance in foreign policy: and these are the two cardinal principles of Prussianism. If he has carried State control to an extreme point, and flooded his land with officials, we must remember that the German people has always liked to be shepherded, especially if the head

shepherd of all be one whom they can adore as well as obey. He has the vast majority of his people entirely with him. It is plain that Herodotus' dictum does not in the least express the position or character of William II.

There are however one or two points in which he does remind us of the Greek tyrants, apart from his striking personality and brilliant restless mind. First, let us note his far-reaching plans, bringing out the quiet unadventurous German people from their studies and domesticities into the world of competition and money-making, and promising them the hegemony not only of Europe but of the world. Navies, colonies, trade and commerce, art and science, were all characteristic of the Greek tyrant, who thus, intentionally or not, did much to take the Greek out of himself and his rather narrow life in his City-state. This is just what the Kaiser has done for his people, and it is impossible to deny that the policy has brought out the German into a new field of action, and made him a tremendous power in it. Whether the German character is the better for it is another question. There are many Germans who do not look with equanimity on either the policy or the results; a friend has just sent me some extracts from an article in the Deutsche Rundschau, in which a strong note of warning is struck against the dangers of this policy, and the German people is urged not to allow itself, like England, to fall into the hands of the great capitalist.

Secondly, on the principle that birds of a feather flock together, we find that the Greek tyrant had a tendency to venture on alliance or friendship with the tyrants of other cities, or even with the great monarchies that lay outside of Greece; and this seems also to be a characteristic of William II. Who are his real friends? Has he ever really cared about French or Italians or British, peoples who know what real liberty means, and instinctively detest Kaiser-worship? His real friends are the other Kaiser, the head of a conglomerate State that has done little but harm in Europe since it ceased to defend us against the Turk: and the treacherous King of Bulgaria, who has ruined his people by three wars in six years: and the Sultan of Turkey, who slaughters his subjects by the hundred thousand just because they are Christians. These are his friends: and the memory of such alliances will one day be a painful one for the German people.

These are points of likeness between the Kaiser and the Greek tyrant. But in the last place I must point out that the main point of *difference*,—that he violates no tradition of his Prussian people,—is itself a most dangerous symptom, for it shows that he associates his people with him in the work of a tyrant. And the force thus accumulated is a far greater force than that of Polycrates and his kind, for it brings us face to face with a *tyrant nation* for the first time in European history. With all their accomplishments, their thoroughness, their organisation, in a word their

Kultur, they are at this moment a tyrant nation, regardless of European law and custom, standing outside the pale of European tradition. Their cruelty and 'frightfulness' will be remembered, like the tyrant's wantonness, as a momentary descent into an abyss, which, if the fall were not arrested, would swallow up all that is best in western civilization.

This then is the new tyrannis, but it will not last. As the sanity of the Greek mind shed the old tyrannis like the slough of a snake, so the good sense of modern humanity is rebelling against the new tyrannis, and is more and more insistently determining to have none of it.

March 3rd.

'Civis Germanus sum'

I have been reading in a morning paper the great speech made in the Roumanian Parliament last December by the statesman Jonescu; one of the finest utterances of the war time, because it passes beyond local incidents and fleeting problems to the vital principles and the permanent interests of humanity. In this speech he happened to allude to a certain saying of the Kaiser's, which had escaped my memory. He speaks of 'the affirmation once made by the Emperor Wilhelm that the time would come when all men would be happy to call themselves German; just as at one time a man would exclaim joyously "Civis Romanus sum."'

If the Kaiser really did say this, it was but one of his many foolish mischievous utterances. But now that German dreams of world dominion have become determined aims capable of being put to proof, it is as well to ask whether there is really any sound analogy between the Roman Empire and that of Germany, which has indeed passed away for the time, but remains as an aspiration of the German people. The Kaiser is not the only person to whom the com-

parison has occurred. My friend Mr Zimmern, in an excellent chapter on 'German Culture and the British Commonwealth,' quotes a British correspondent as asking 'Hasn't it ever struck you what a close parallel there is between Germany and Rome'? I myself have now and then fancied that there is a likeness in some points between the motive forces of Rome and Germany; but on reflection I always rejected this fancy as no less superficial and fallacious than the other fanciful analogy, of which German historians have been fond since the days of Mommsen and Treitschke, between England and Carthage.

The Kaiser meant, I suppose, that a time is coming when the great modern 'world-race,' (as Germans fondly call themselves) will have done its conquering work so efficiently, 'settled its accounts' with all possible rivals so favourably, that the world will be glad to have itself absorbed, body and soul, in a German system, and will be glad to share in some degree the ineffable benefits of German citizenship. He was thinking *back*, an unfortunate way the Germans have, and one almost always misleading: he was thinking back to a time when all the civilized world was governed by a single great organised force, when the shadow of the Roman power, or the power that went by the name of Roman, had spread over the Mediterranean basin, and when to be *civis Romanus* was the only privilege worth having.

In such comparisons, it need hardly be said, the dreamer sees what he wants to see, not the actual

facts. So it is with other dreams about the mediæval Germanic empire of the Hohenstaufen; history is perverted to flatter a German pride that is both modern and vulgar. Germans can do excellent detailed work, but when they begin to generalise in history they need very careful criticism.

In order to test the comparison between Rome and Germany, I ask myself the simple question, how did the Romans come by their Empire? The truth is that it came to them without being sought for,—nay, without being realised till they were far on in the work of empire-making. That process began in self-defence, passed gradually into an offensive-defensive, and finally relapsed into a gigantic organised effort of resistance to the pressure of external barbarism. For five hundred years this process went on with varying fortune, marked in its earlier periods by crime, folly, and injustice, and by wisdom, good-sense, and justice, in its maturity; by government for selfish objects in the age of the republic, after Augustus, mainly for the benefit of the governed. During this long process Rome and the Romans, names which came to stand for Italy and the Italians, and later for the Roman system generally, became intimately known to all the world, just as the world became intimately known to all ruling and trading Romans. What claim has Germany of to-day to be compared with the people who went through this slow and half-unconscious process for five centuries, losing in the course of it almost everything that was Roman but the name, and finding

at last their best strength and defence in races quite foreign to them in speech and habit?

One sees at once that there is no analogy; the world has only had knowledge of the Germans for a generation or two, and Germany has had but a very short experience of what an empire means. So far as we can see, the world at present does not approve of Germans, and Germany has learnt but little by her brief experience. If the Kaiser was looking forward with prophetic mind for some five hundred years or so, there might be some excuse for his rash words; but it is more probable that he was merely expressing the fanciful ideas of history in which his intoxicated subjects are allowed to indulge. He should have learnt both from Roman and from British history that empires are not built in a day, and that they cannot be built without experience often painful and disheartening, but slowly leading onwards to repentance, improvement, success. They do not come into existence at the call of War-lords who announce a policy and support it with shining armour; they grow slowly and almost invisibly, and have succeeded where their makers have been ready to wait, to learn by experience, and to forget themselves and their nationality in wider and perhaps nobler spheres of work.

Let us take another point. What was it in the Roman empire that made it possible, as M. Jonescu puts it, for a man to exclaim joyously 'Civis Romanus sum'? What was the principle or basic

force that could produce such happy confidence? There is only one possible answer to this question. It was Law and Justice, protecting the person and property of the Roman citizen throughout the empire; enabled to do so by the military defence of the frontiers, the only function of the Roman legions when once the empire had been consolidated and organised. This Roman law, as we call it, was not the law of a single race imposed on subject peoples; it was a system of rules and precedents gathered from the experience of Greek as well as Italian life, and everywhere administered in the interest of the peoples who lived under it. This was the one great life-giving principle of the Roman empire, when it had been so consolidated and organised as to have a good claim to be called an empire. It was not a principle of self-assertion, but one of adaptation to the needs of others.

So far as I know, this is quite different from any claim put forward by the Germans to the right of empire. Theirs is a principle of self-assertion; they say that they have the necessary force, human and mechanical, that they have Kultur, that is (as Mr Zimmern well explains it) literature, philosophy, science, art, education, and this last highly organised with the object of perpetuating the German idea. Now the world's experience of successful empires does not seem to show that either of these claims is the one thing needful for permanence in imperial consolidation. Force is out of the question; conquests

may be made by explosives and military discipline, but empires cannot be maintained by such agencies. In truth the more they are used, the less possible will empire become. Then as to Kultur, even if this could constitute a claim to rule over distant peoples, which is not confirmed by experience, are the Germans in this respect superior to all other races? Except in their own estimation, it would not seem to be so. M. Jonescu boldly asks whether the contribution of Germany to the common treasure of human civilisation is superior to that of Italy, of France, of the Anglo-Saxon races, and as boldly answers in the negative. 'If we were to remove Germany's contribution,' he says, 'the treasure possessed by the human race would remain intact, a little reduced to be sure, but in no wise diminished in *quality*.' The Roumanians assented to this assertion with resounding cheers.

The pride of the *civitas Romana* had little or no connection either with military force and discipline, or with Kultur, if I may continue to use that word. Even the use of the word Roman had no analogy with the Kaiser's use of the word 'German.' 'Roman' stood not for a nationality but for a principle of law and justice. Thus when carefully examined, the Kaiser's dictum appears shallow and superficial.

In one respect however there is a real likeness between the Roman empire and the Germany of to-day. In its best days the Roman empire was a very perfect organisation; so far as the machinery of government

was concerned it would probably be true to say that no such perfect organisation has ever existed till the nineteenth century, and then only in Germany. Yet the Roman empire failed to carry out its task of protecting the Mediterranean peoples against the flood of barbarism pressing in from north and east: and among the many causes that have been suggested to account for this, one very generally accepted is the paralysing effect of exaggerated organisation. System flourished and independence withered. In all departments of human activity there came in due time a failure of initiative, accompanied with weariness and inertia. Just such a result can be traced to the over-organisation of the mediæval Church, paralysing human freedom of thought. If Germany were to recover the empire she has just lost, and to carry it on with the intensely national organisation we now see aimed at our own destruction, we should hardly be rash in prophesying that sooner or later paralysis would come upon her.

On the whole, there does not seem to be any good reason at present why anyone should wish to be *Civis Germanus* who is not *Civis Germanus* already; nor does there seem to be any prospect of a time coming when that is likely to be so.

March 12th.

An Old-fashioned Recreation

GAME-PLAYING has been one of the delights of human nature in all ages and among all races of men. At certain times it has degenerated into gambling. Tacitus tells us that among some of the ancient German tribes a man would gamble his personal liberty away, if he had nothing left to stake. I do not know that their modern representatives have inherited the passion, unless we are to consider war as a game. But the inhabitants of modern Britain, whether Anglo-Saxons or Celts or what not, towards the end of the nineteenth century and later (so history will have to relate) put such an amount of serious energy into the practice of out-of-door games that they ceased to be games altogether in any true sense of the word.

But after 1914 all that serious energy had to be transferred to the war, and now the British people, sobered and anxious, thinks no longer of cricket and football. The 'Blue' may say with the poet:

> 'That time is past,
> And all its aching joys are now no more
> And all its dizzy raptures.'

Here our village schoolboys still play on their

green, but their game does not seem to me quite the same joyous thing it used to be. Of the whole country I hope we may foretell that the fever will never return on us with such virulence as we have known in our time.

But indoors, of winter evenings in war time, a quiet game is useful and refreshing: it lifts the heavy burden for a brief half-hour. Let me sing the praise of one of these indoor games, an old-fashioned one, interesting but not too often exciting, in which an old-fashioned couple have found much solace in these bad times.

So far as I can remember, Backgammon was the first real game I ever played; and it seems destined to be the last I am to enjoy. Long periods of my life have been almost gameless, but when the mood has come upon me again, it has always led me to Backgammon. Its advantages to me are many.

It is never the same from one game to another. You may play one or two comparatively dull games, but they will be followed by one in which the gentle excitement is maintained to the very last throw. For as Cæsar said of war, in Backgammon '*fortuna maximum potest.*' Fortune gives your adversary a sudden chance, and all your plans and hopes are suddenly upset: then there is nothing to do but to set your back against the wall, and risk everything to save defeat. And indeed it is one of those few games in which one may never say die: I have often known a win snatched from what has seemed a com-

plete *bouleversement*. A beginner may well win a game his very first evening, though it is not likely that he will win a rubber against a skilled antagonist. A rubber, three games, takes but half an hour to play, or even less, and the excitement is so mild and pleasant that you are not tempted to go on and on in search of better luck. It is not a game for a gamester. You can play it by yourself if need be, when brain or eyes are overtaxed, and no adversary presents himself.

These are the natural advantages of Backgammon for a quiet life or old age. But from one whose pursuits are literary or scientific it claims a reverence of a weightier kind. It is the most literary of all games. Not because the board on which you play is shaped like a book, consisting in fact of two large volumes entitled ' English history,' or ' the works of Josephus ': but read where you will in English fiction or essay, from the *Spectator* to Dickens, you will find Backgammon there. Scores of times have I noticed it; and had I dreamed that I should ever write this paper, I would have made a collection of such passages. But alas, novels have no indices, and it is now waste of time to hunt for them. I must be content with a few chance cuttings from the poor stores of a bad memory.

Scott was fond of the game, and mentions it now and then in those Waverleys which paint the manners of his own time or his father's. Somewhere in his diary I remember finding a characteristic phrase,

'One should play for the gammon,' that is, one should face the world courageously and take some risk: a 'hit' is something, but a 'gammon' is better. Not with such courage did timid Mr. Woodhouse play this game every evening with his daughter Emma, whose high spirits must often have tempted her to 'play for the gammon,' yet she loved her father too well to snatch a triumph often. A few years later Elia records Mrs. Battle's opinion, which need not surprise us. 'She disliked the mixture of chance in backgammon, where it was not played for money. She called it foolish, and those people idiots who were taken with a lucky hit under such circumstances.'

When Becky Sharp was governess at Queen's Crawley, she used to play backgammon every night with Sir Pitt. For this she was taken to task by the pious Mr. Crawley, who said that it was a godless amusement, and that she would be much better engaged in reading 'The Blind Washerwoman of Moorfields' or any work of a more serious nature; but Miss Sharp said her dear mother used often to play the same game with the old Count de Trictrac—and so on. *Vanity Fair* was published in 1848. Two years later, at a certain cottage at Dover, destined to stand firm while English literature lasts, when the question suddenly arose of David Copperfield's going to school, Mr. Dick played so badly that Aunt Betsy had to rap his fingers with her dice-box and finally to shut up the board.

An Old-fashioned Recreation

Backgammon survived into the mid-Victorian period. Darwin played it every evening with his wife, and for many years (so his son tells us) a score of the games was kept, in which he took the greatest interest. 'He became extremely animated over these games, bitterly lamenting his bad luck, and exploding with exaggerated mock anger at my mother's good fortune.' And once more, if my memory does not deceive me, Gladstone and Tennyson played our game when cruising in Sir Donald Currie's 'Pembroke Castle.'

Has it really gone out like a candle? That is hardly possible: it has lasted too long. For I have omitted to mention, what should please my archæological friends, that it was played by the Aztecs of Mexico before the discovery of America. Anyone who will hunt up *Macmillan's Magazine* for December, 1878, will find the proof of this, and many other wonderful facts in the ancient history of the game, set forth by the greatest of British archæologists, now Sir Edward B. Tylor. Its antiquity is hoary, and it is now thought old-fashioned, but it shall yet see good days and relume its ancient light. We must have such games; and this one seems to suit many types of mind, from Mr. Woodhouse's feeble intellect to Darwin's mighty one.

FEBRUARY 11TH.

Reading Aloud

It is not so very long since the English rural family dined at five or even at four, and then settled down to

> 'Fireside enjoyments, homeborn happiness,
> And all the comforts that the lowly roof
> Of undisturbed Retirement, and the hours
> Of long uninterrupted evening, know.'

I can remember the survival of this habit in the six o'clock dinner of our Oxford colleges, followed by three or four hours of work or of play, as the case might be, which were relieved by the making of tea, with a 'tea commons' for the hungry, which we most of us were.

In the country house, to judge by the novels and memoirs of earlier days, there were three favourite ways of passing long evenings: games, music, and reading aloud. The last two are described by Cowper in his 'Winter Evening,' in some graceful lines that follow those I quoted above, but for games we must go elsewhere.

'The poet's or historian's page by one
Made vocal for th' amusement of the rest:
The sprightly lyre, whose treasure of sweet
sounds . . .'

It would be pleasant to continue the quotation, but I am not to speak of music here. Music and reading in that serious household beguiled the time till

'The volume closed, the customary rites
Of the last meal commence.'

In Jane Austen's time it would seem that sensible or sensitive young ladies would weigh the merits of young men by their skill in reading aloud, and the ordeal must sometimes have been severe. 'Oh, Mamma,' exclaims Marianne (at the age of sixteen), 'how spiritless, how tame, was Edward's manner of reading to us last night! To hear those beautiful lines, which have frequently driven me almost wild, pronounced with such impenetrable calmness, such dreadful indifference!' Willoughby, on the other hand, read with 'all the sensibility and spirit which Edward had unfortunately wanted.' The family at Longbourne was also in the habit of listening to a reader of evenings: for Mr. Collins, before that game of backgammon with his host which I forgot to mention in a previous paper, was asked to read, and to the dismay of everyone selected a volume of Fordyce's sermons.

To leave fiction for a moment (though I find it hard to believe that Mr. Bennet and his circle were not as real as any of us), Sir Walter was a constant

reader in his own family, and made his children read. 'My eldest girl,' he wrote to Crabbe, 'begins to read well, and enters as well into the humour as the sentiment of your admirable descriptions of human life.' Crabbe himself read aloud every winter evening books of all kinds, and especially travels. In the snowy winter of the Crimean War, when I was eight years old, my father used to read Macaulay's history, of which the last two volumes had recently appeared; he read admirably, slowly and clearly; and the strong and fervid current of Macaulay's language so entirely carried me away, that years afterwards, when I read the siege of Derry for myself, I could recall every picture, every incident. Some years later I heard Tennyson read his 'Guinevere' one summer evening at Marlborough; and about the same time Barnes came to read us some of his tender Dorset lyrics. The contrast between the two poets and their manner of reading was too striking to be forgotten.

In my opinion it is so hard to read the best poetry aloud with really good effect, that I do not recommend it for an evening pursuit in these Bad Times. The best poetry, like the best music, is of far too subtle an essence, of workmanship far too choice, to be readily caught by mind and ear at once. A volume of poems is like a gallery of pictures—if you wander from one picture to another, or turn the pages of the poet too rapidly, the result will probably be confusion of brain-power. I think I may safely say that it is little use reading poetry aloud

unless both you and your hearers know it beforehand, have a common ground in it of affection or association. But this does not apply to novels and tales, travels and memoirs, and with these a lively reader, interested in the book himself, at home with a quiet audience, may pass many a happy hour. It is a good plan to look over beforehand what you are going to read, and knowing the bent and capacity of your hearers, to decide what, if any, you will omit —what paragraphs, sentences, or words.

I have read aloud all Jane Austen's novels, and some others of the best water, during the evenings of this wearisome war, to an audience of two persons, neither of them versed in literature. I was invariably reading what I knew well—too well, alas, for constant fresh reading by myself—but never too well for interesting others in those sweet, serene old stories. What a pleasure to come upon the bits you have so long cherished, and to pass on the enjoyment to others!

Having had so much experience, I need not be afraid to add a word of advice. Never read for long at a time; find a good place to stop, if possible where some new vista opens out, down which your hearers cannot yet see, and close the book long before you have read for an hour. Again, read slowly, but not too slowly: the story or the traveller must be moving, but not galloping. Lastly, never attempt to read what you do not really love. In Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, there are descriptions and

disquisitions that must be omitted, and nothing is lost by their omission.

One who has had so much profit and enjoyment from the practice may be justified in hoping, perhaps without much confidence, that in the more peaceful days to come it may be revived among us.

FEBRUARY 11TH.

Learning by Heart

A GAME, a little reading aloud, and half an hour for music—the best music only, from Bach to Brahms, with a preference, if mind or body be tired, for the *younger* music of Haydn and Mozart; in this way the old couple can pass an hour or two of their evenings, laying aside the anxieties and perils of a world fighting for liberty. But at night, and especially in the early morning, if one chance to wake, these are not available as soporifics.

At such times it is well to have the memory provided with some choice pieces of English poetry, poetry both thoughtful and beautiful, on which the mind can rest with quiet pleasure. In my experience it should be poetry of a solid kind, but not intellectually exacting, not obscure, nor yet wayward or wordy. I do not attempt Shelley, Blake, Byron, Browning, Meredith, or Francis Thompson; in fact I have not as yet travelled much beyond Shakespeare, Milton, and Wordsworth, where I have always found the quality I look for. What I need is strength and clearness of thought, which when familiar will not call for mental effort, but simply engage the mind

and ear with beauty of diction and perfection of rhythm. Of such pieces I can say with Comus, in that lovely passage which I committed to memory more than half a century ago, that

> 'They float upon the wings
> Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night,
> At every fall smoothing the raven down
> Of darkness till it smiles.'

Of such poetry I can assert that it only fully reveals itself to me when thus learnt; and it is the same with the finest music. Then the artist's working mind is laid bare, and to some extent at least it is possible to share his emotion. Then it is that when a word fails you, and presently returns, you welcome the truant with a sense of wonder and gratitude,—wonder that you should ever have lost it, and gratitude for its perfect adequacy; and so perchance you fall asleep contented. Then it is too, I must add, that any flaw in the poetry reveals itself; but of such flaws I will say nothing, except that Wordsworth, even at his best, is not always without them.

I sincerely trust that learning by heart is not going out of fashion in our public schools, for it may be full of value for years to come. A sixth form master at one great school wrote to me lately that his boys were 'destined' to learn by heart the last two hundred and fifty lines of Paradise Lost, Book I. I was myself, I believe, indirectly responsible for the choice, and recalling my own school memories, I sent those boys a message of congratulation. All that I

ever learnt in those early days has become a permanent part of my mental furniture, for it was all well chosen. It was nearly all either Virgil, Shakespeare, or Milton.

I do not think, however, that quite young children should be made to learn poetry of this weighty kind, nor indeed anything that they cannot easily understand, and repeat without gabbling. I suppose we have all learnt collects in our time, and many of these are as perfect specimens of English as can well be found; but let them be kept for minds fairly mature. Let anyone who would be reminded of the gabbling of collects by schoolchildren turn out the forty-fourth chapter of Mr Hardy's 'Far from the Madding Crowd,'—one of his most characteristic episodes. Bathsheba, in her swampy hollow in the early morning, hears a schoolboy murmuring words. 'O Lord, O Lord, O Lord, O Lord: that I know out o' book,' and so on. In any case, I imagine, this form of school exercise needs discretion on the part of the teacher. We differ greatly from each other in the natural quickness of our memories; some seem magically keen and retentive, others comparatively slow and dull. Among those who have possessed the gift, and made rich use of it, we can reckon Johnson, Scott, and above all Macaulay, who could 'say his Archbishops of Canterbury backwards.' The late Mr Churton Collins, if you gave him a signal, would rattle on like an express train in English, Latin, or Greek. Long ago I knew well a fine old lady who

was fond of telling how, when the 'Lay of the Last Minstrel' first came out, she read the first canto to her parents in the evening, and repeated it to them next morning after breakfast. It is a gift not necessarily associated with intellectual power or acuteness, for I remember boys of no special ability who learnt their repetition with enviable ease.

If these differences were taken into account, the discipline would seem to be an excellent one, for a repetition lesson cannot be shirked by any puerile ingenuity. But I am on the borders of the schoolmaster's domain, and I will only raise one more question. Should the learning of repetition be used penally in schools?

I suppose the time has passed away when it was liable, like corporal punishment, to serious abuse. On both these abuses Dickens laid his finger with unerring felicity. We all remember 'Dotheboys Hall' and 'Salem House'; not so many, perhaps, Dr. Blimber's establishment for young gentlemen at Brighton, where scholastic torture of the mind was substituted for the vulgar chastisement of the body. 'Johnson,' said Dr. Blimber, in that immortal scene where the victim had interrupted, by choking, the Doctor's discourse to his boys about the Romans (that terrible people, their implacable enemies)—'Johnson will repeat to me to-morrow morning from the Greek Testament and without book, the first chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians.' I remember an eccentric master, for some co-operative

misdemeanour of his form, making us learn by heart the first chapter of St. Matthew, genealogy and all. Yet, strange to say, my first acquaintance with Gray's 'Elegy' was the result of some small failure of duty at school, and I have never loved that poem any the less on that account.

Much has been done during the last half-century or more to humanise our juvenile delinquents. Are they allowed the privilege of learning good poetry by heart? My friend Mr. George Cookson's 'Poetry for Repetition' is, I hope, well known in Reformatory Schools. Whenever I read 'Oliver Twist' to its end I always regret the premature expatriation of the Artful Dodger, whose keen mental faculties must have been wasted at Botany Bay. I like to imagine him learning Shakespeare and Milton by heart in a Reformatory School, in the intervals of honest labour out of doors.

March 14th.

A New Interest in Bird-life

When the scores, perhaps hundreds, of young men interested in ornithology return from the war after the victory that is coming, it is to be hoped that they will be ready for some new and vigorous work in the wooded nooks and furzy brakes of our beloved England. Such work is ready for them, and it is of a kind that needs all the vigilance and patience that they have been exercising so long in the great cause of humanity. It consists in the verification or correction of a newly promulgated law of bird-life.

All of us who have been by way of watching birds, or looking for their nests, know that many species, and especially those summer migrants which we commonly call warblers, never build their nests in close proximity to each other. Each pair seem to have a territory, a property with a couple of months' lease, where they can be sure of plenty of food for themselves and their young, and plenty of room to play in without interruption from others of their own clan. This territory (to use the word now commonly in use for the institution) may be inhabited by birds of *other* species; a sedge-warbler's territory

in an osier-bed may also be part of the territory of a reed-bunting. In that case the two species live together in peace; and it may be that their food is not exactly the same, so that the most likely cause of war, except the sexual one, is eliminated. But within that territory of the sedge-warbler it seems to be understood that no other sedge-warbler has a right to appear.

Good examples of these territories may often be found on the banks and in the cuttings of railways, of which some species are particularly fond; and here they become evident to the eye, because the birds invariably use the telegraph wires as posts of vantage from which they can survey their territories and the position of the nest in some hollow of the bank below them. The railway with which I am most familiar supplies successive pairs of whinchats with excellent territories varying in length from one to three hundred yards, which are only here and there broken in upon by the claims of a tree-pipit or a yellow-hammer. In dense cover the territories are naturally smaller, for there the pairs can find both food and privacy in a more confined space. But I have noticed that if the cover be cut down or if any part of it be cleared away, the nests in the next season will be further from each other and the territories larger. I once had under observation, in an osier-bed of not more than half an acre, no less than five nests of the rare Marsh Warbler; but when the greater part of the osiers were cut down, though

there was still plenty of cover that might (so we fancied) have suited them, only one pair enjoyed this half-acre as a territory the next season, and one or two other pairs made futile attempts to nest in adjoining fields.

The swallow tribe, of course, have no territories, for obvious reasons. Their food is entirely in the air, and in the indivisible air they work and play: so they can nest in groups or colonies without quarrelling. Gregarious birds—rooks, for example—need more watching before we can be sure that they have tribal estates, as I assumed long ago for the purposes of a story.* But Mr. J. M. Dewar seems to have proved that the flocks of oyster-catchers inhabiting the Firth of Forth have clearly marked territories of sand-bank, and it will probably be found that many other species have the same fixed habit. To push forward our knowledge of this 'law of territory' will be much more useful work for young and vigorous observers than bird-photography, which is usually great waste of time.

This phrase, 'the law of territory,' was invented by the distinguished ornithologist who has carried our casual knowledge of these things into the region of science, Mr. H. Eliot Howard. His two magnificent volumes on British Warblers are too expensive in these times for those to buy who did not take them in as they appeared in parts, and it is to be hoped that he may write a *brief* account of his ex-

* A tragedy in Rook-life: in 'Tales of the Birds.

perience, summarising his conclusions. These may be called scientific, because they are based on knowledge collected by him in those hours when the birds are more full of life than at any other—the hours immediately after sunrise—and at the time of year when they are biologically more interesting than at any other—the time of courting and nesting. He rises before the sun and remains in ambush for hours: he will have nothing to do with the clumsy camera, but trusts to his pencil and his memory. When you are alone, intent on your work, eye and ear well disciplined to duty, and your interest as breathlessly keen as is possible for human nature, it is astonishing how accurate your memory can be: and if it be helped out by a kind of shorthand notes, and by rapid sketching, as in Mr. Howard's case, its evidence may be called scientific.

But it is most important that these observations should be followed up, because the conclusions based on them are still in the region of hypothesis. Mr. Howard's vigils have led him to the conclusion that the 'law of territory' is of immense importance in the life of our warblers; that the desire to secure a territory is what hurries on the males in front of the females during migration: that the vigorous singing on arrival is an announcement of occupation, and a defiance to the claims of other males of the species: and that the bird's sense of boundary is unmistakeable, though it may not exactly coincide with that which the observer imagines it to be.

No one can test these conclusions, and others of no less interest, who is not ready to be up with the sun when the males of a species begin to appear in their territories, and to watch and listen with eye and ear intent before the females come, during the courtship, while the nest is building, and finally during the arduous work of bringing up the family. It is possible that closer observation of more species may modify some of Mr. Howard's conclusions. In any case, here is work well suited to young Englishmen who have had to accustom themselves to abnormal hours in the trenches; and work of supreme charm for those who love to be alone with other living creatures when they do not know you are watching them, and do not seem to mind you even if they find you out.

February 23rd.

Birds at the Front in France

To-day, March 22nd, I looked out in our 'war-box' a cutting from the *Times* of March 2nd, with the heading 'Birds at the Front.' That this is the work of an officer with a true instinct for birds I can see at once; and it is one of those precious reminiscences of the war, and indeed of one of the hottest corners of the war, that must not be allowed to disappear. Personally I feel most grateful to the writer, for he has revived in me the memories of two delightful ornithological visits to the valley of the Somme—not at the actual British front of to-day, but not so far behind it, with the heights of Creçy lying between.

At the present moment the Somme forms a part of the French front at a point some distance above Amiens; whether the British front actually touches it I do not know. But the place where we studied its birds some years ago was much lower down, not far from the point where trains from Calais run into the broad valley; here, looking to the west, one can see the course of the river almost to the sea. A little further south the train passes the town of Abbeville,

our headquarters, and then plunges into that region of reedy marsh and swamp, of broad *marais* fringed with willow and poplar, which looks almost repulsive to the traveller as he rushes through it, yet is in reality so full of beauties that artists as well as ornithologists might do well to visit it. Our experiences in this region in early summer time correspond so closely to those of the writer in the *Times* that I feel as though I, too, know something of the 'Birds at the Front.'

This day last year, March 22nd, the Chiffchaffs arrived at the front from the south; they were in England a few days later. On the 17th a young friend wrote to me from the fighting line and made no mention of them; and as he was a very keen-eyed observer, we may be sure they were not there then. He had just returned from the Riviera, where he had been nursing frozen feet and watching a few birds; but the only one he mentions in the trenches is the Little Owl. 'Last night, by-the-way, I heard a Little Owl, or something jolly like it. Are they supposed to inhabit Flanders?' Yes, the Little Owl is common enough in Flanders, but, alas, I heard no more of it from my young friend,* who gave his life for the great cause before he had time to write to me again.

Our friend of the *Times* goes on to tell us how he identified the Icterine warbler on the ramparts of Ypres. One spot near Abbeville will always remain

* Cecil Macmillan Dyer.

in my memory as the haunt of this gentle and confiding bird, whose sweet and varied song is so quiet that if he were at all shy it would not be easy to hear him. A road crosses the broad valley of the Somme towards the west, and then runs under the shelter of a rampart of chalk hills lying between the valley and the coast; the gardens of red-tiled cottages are on one side of the road, high hedges and timber trees on the other. Here it was that the Icterine sang to us for two successive days without any shyness, imitating the Sedge and Reed Warblers, the Blackcap and the Greenfinch. He is a pleasant bird to watch, when once you catch his delicate little greenish form in the foliage; he sits there quite serene and still, only quivering his wings when he moves.

In this delightful sheltered spot we were fully occupied with many birds, but the one most grateful to British eyes was a Hoopoe, in search of food for its young in a small field among the gardens. This bird kept hovering just above the grass like a great butterfly, a Painted Lady, as my friend suggested, the black and white of its drooping wings showing brilliantly in the sunshine in contrast with the pale brown of its other parts. After hovering about in this curious way for a while, it seemed to find a caterpillar, and carried it into an adjoining field in which we could not well trespass; then it returned, and chancing to alight on a piece of freshly turned earth, folded its wings and instantly became invisible.

The officer at the front does not mention the Hoopoe, but *en revanche* he tells of a bird we failed to find, the Golden Oriole. I am sure he will forgive me if I quote his most interesting account of this fine bird, which is seldom seen now in England.

'Late in June I heard that an Oriole's nest had been found in an oak wood. There was an oak wood, too, near my billet, and a fortnight later a friend and I heard a clear whistle which we agreed came from an Oriole—or rather there were four Orioles chasing each other round the tree-tops in a state of great excitement, whistling and screeching. Two days later one pair at any rate seemed to have settled down to nest. I sat down to watch, and at last saw the hen hopping cautiously from bough to bough to a little thin oak tree a hundred yards from me. She flew to what looked like a small round ball hanging from one of the branches. I could hardly believe I had found the nest so easily, but ten minutes later she returned to the same place, and that time I saw a blade of grass in her mouth, and there was no further doubt.'

The same observer mentions the Great Reed Warbler as inhabiting the moat of a château at which he was billeted, and adds that he 'became intimately acquainted with its domestic affairs.' This is one of the most abundant birds in all the region we may call 'the front'; and behind the front, along the *marais* of the Somme, you may even hear his loud croaking voice from the train window as you run through

them. As a rule he is well concealed in the reeds, but if you can find a place where you can see without being seen, he will presently emerge from the undergrowth, climb a stem, and declaim vigorously for many minutes without stopping. I have seen one fly up into a poplar, and sit there looking very like a thrush, which accounts for his French colloquial name, *grive d'eau*, the water thrush. He is an amusing creature, and his pertinacious croaking must have helped our men to pass many a weary hour along the Yser and the canals. Those who know the gentle and rather monotonous soliloquy of the common Reed Warbler may realise what the song of his big cousin is like, if they can imagine it being played on a bassoon instead of an oboe.

The Crested Lark has now and then been taken on our south coast, but has never been known to breed on our side of the Channel. Yet in the Pas de Calais, and throughout Flanders, he is common enough, and now he has the distinction of having had his nest discovered on the field of battle, and even during an interval in the fighting. This was during the second battle of Ypres, when 'a very lovesick cock in a hop-garden' attracted our military bird-lover's attention. 'He was panting with excitement, mouth open, wings trailing, his crest and ridiculous stump of a tail erect, altogether an absurd spectacle.' As the nest was already built, and was found directly afterwards in an adjoining field of wheat, I suspect that these ridiculous performances

were really the result of excitement about the safety of the nest. Mr. Eliot Howard, in his 'British Warblers,' has shown beyond doubt that they are used both in courting and in moments of serious danger; in other words, that the antics of the courting season and those of the instinct of 'feigning wounded,' are in reality much the same.

The callousness of some birds under the fire of German artillery is most astonishingly illustrated in the *Times* article. I have long noticed that the tremendous noise and vibration of an express train running at fifty or sixty miles an hour does not in the least disturb the whinchat, robin, or yellowhammer, that may have a nest within a few feet of the rails. They place their nests deliberately in such places, and no doubt the strong brooding instinct carries them through it all; they cease even to notice the momentary hubbub, though the cock bird sitting on the wires above invariably flies off for a minute or two. But it is indeed astonishing that the sudden explosion of a shell should fail to annoy a breeding pair. A pair of blackcaps had their nest blown sideways by shells, and rebuilt it within ten feet of the old nest. The eggs were as white as a woodpigeon's; but it does not follow, I imagine, that this was the result of fright.

Just lately all of us who have been reading the accounts of the coolness and heroism of the French soldiers at Verdun, under the most terrific fire of explosives that as yet the world has ever known,

have felt it almost impossible to believe that such a hell-fire could have been endured by mortal men. But the nightingales in our lines about Ypres, who may count as *our* nightingales, not the enemy's, were not less heroic. A brood of young nightingales was hatched on the day of the heaviest Hooge bombardment on the lip of the first-line trench. 'On May 13th, at 3 a.m., in the garden of my château, I heard a nightingale begin to sing. Half an hour afterwards German shells were rained upon the garden incessantly throughout the day. The bird sang without a pause where the shells fell thickest until midday, and survived, for next morning he started again as cheerily as ever.'

Truly a brave bird, and a fitting companion for a brave British officer, who of his own peril from those shells says not a word. Another brave British officer, my friend Capt. A. W. Boyd, has lately contributed to the *Zoologist* a most interesting paper on the birds of the Dardanelles. The spring is coming; I picked white violets yesterday, and primroses were brought us in the evening. Soon the nightingales will be here, to pass the summer safely in quiet coverts; but across the water the relentless, weary war goes on, and those who provoked it show little sign of repentance.

March 23rd.

German Thoroughness

(Prof. R. Wünsch)

I HAVE just received a copy of a German learned periodical, edited till lately by Professor R. Wünsch, of Königsberg. I knew that Wünsch was dead, but I did not know till this number came that he was a victim of the war. Now a touching notice of him by his friend and successor, Professor Deubner, tells me that he was killed last May in one of the battles in Poland. It seems that the high sense of duty that marked all his work compelled him to revert to soldiering, abandoning many a cherished project of study, and the editorship to which he was devoting much of his time. I feel deep regret that so useful a life should have been sacrificed; and I feel it all the more because I have been in touch with him by letter, and have found him always most cordial as an editor.

There is a photograph of him in the number that has just reached me. It seems to me to represent a typical German of the best strain; the head is square and solid, the expression mild and earnest; it is the face of a man who takes life and duty very seriously.

It is not the face of a genius, but rather of a steady, patient, confident workman. And indeed it is true that Wünsch was an excellent specimen of that German thoroughness to which we in England owe so much help, and of late, alas, so much peril. This thoroughness is so remarkable a quality of the German people that I am tempted to set down a few thoughts about it. I ask myself what it practically means, and whether there are any drawbacks attached to it.

It means in the first place a steady and continuous individual industry, under guidance until the habit is fully acquired of working according to some approved method, of adapting means to ends in the prosecution of a design. The student has to learn to dispense with recreation, and to occupy all his time, except perhaps an hour or two in the evening, in attacking his chosen subject both by highways and byways; for the gradual increase of knowledge about every possible subject compels him to learn foreign languages, and to be constantly reading and carefully weighing new publications in his own tongue, which is often difficult to follow even for a native, owing to the carelessness of the use of it which prevails in the German learned and scientific circles.

Secondly, his work is never individually independent; his professors take care of that. German work is always organised; it is co-operation in a common cause. Thus an immense amount of time is saved,

which in England is (or used to be) wasted, for want of the combination that keeps workers to a definite purpose, and helps them to the knowledge of work already achieved. These workers are in Germany like a pack of hounds all running on a scent under control of one or two whips. Workers in England have too often resembled hounds running on their own account out of sight of the huntsman, greatly enjoying themselves in unconscious futility. But in Germany, more than in any other country, progress is slowly but surely won; for this thoroughness of treatment is applied not only to designs suggested by Germans, but the acuteness of less industrious foreigners is often exploited with good effect. If a valuable hint is dropped outside Germany, an army of industrious Teutons instantly appropriates and developes it.

This organisation of industry in research is not an old institution in Germany; it dates, like the organisation of commerce and fighting-power, from the era of the unification of Germany, when all the centres of learning came under the control of the State. In my own special subject, Roman history, the first great German worker stood quite alone, and was by no means a *persona grata* with the dusty and pedantic professor of a century ago. It is a curious fact, attested by Bunsen in his estimate of Niebuhr's character,* that the famous Roman History sold much better in England than in Germany, better in transla-

* *Life and Letters of Niebuhr*, Vol. II, p. 468.

tion than in German. The great change came with Theodor Mommsen, who heroically abandoned his great gifts as an artistic historian in order to organise the co-operation of a great number of competent men in the great work of collecting and editing all the ancient Latin inscriptions of Europe. He acted as whip to a splendid pack of German hounds, and the result has been to make the history of the Roman empire a very different thing from that same empire in the hands of Gibbon.

I do not suppose that Englishmen or Irishmen can ever reach the present German standard of industry and co-operation; Scotchmen may well do so, for they are by nature more persistent workers. But as we hope that even in England serious work will be taken more seriously than before the war, it may be as well to beware of too servile an imitation of our present enemies. Their great quality of thoroughness has its drawbacks, of which a word shall be said here.

To begin with, it is obvious that this thoroughness, inculcated in all German education, and enforced by State supervision, is liable to discourage the free development of the individual mind; and this the best Germans know very well. It is not a system of cramming and examinations, such as has been hurtful with us, but a steady continuous educational *drive*, the pressure of which it is almost impossible to escape. Clever boys are not allowed to get on too quickly: my nephews, when they left a German gym-

nasium for an English public school, found themselves behind the English boys of their own age. It must be said, however, that enlightened Germans have long been criticising this feature in their education,—the Kaiser, I believe, among them.

Then again, the habit of continuous industry thus inculcated tends to make the student overdo his duty to his work, and to deprive his brain of the freshness and brightness which is necessary if materials are to be handled with good judgment and results expressed in a *masterly* manner. That word *masterly*, in my experience of the German output in my own subject, can rarely now be applied to German books of research. Innumerable books and articles are continually appearing, and seem to disappear as quickly. They are often useful as works of reference, but do not grip your mind with a sense of delight at the profit you get from them. And the language of learning in Germany is almost always without felicity of expression, because the mind of the writer is overwhelmed with its subject-matter. This was not so with the best Germans of sixty and seventy years ago.

This very large output of dull printed matter constitutes a serious pull upon the mind and eyes of the student, who himself wants to be writing, and (as it seems to me) is encouraged to write for publication too early in life, before he has ranged all round his subject. What he writes is thorough within certain limits, but often wants distinction, and the valuable

quality that comes only with maturity. And it is, or used to be, often misdirected. A friend once sent me a German dissertation on 'The Vicar of Wakefield' by a student or professor (I forget which) of English literature; the knowledge shown was astonishing, but it was used—with characteristic thoroughness—to discover whence Goldsmith 'cribbed' all his characters and incidents. The result was to deprive him so completely of all claim to originality, that he might have been a German student himself, laboriously compiling his immortal story in a library, with a pile of books around him. Misused thoroughness must be an old weakness of the German, for a century ago Beethoven, in a letter to a violoncellist friend, thus grimly made fun of it: 'I am going to write a treatise on the 'cello; Part I. will treat of entrails in general, Part II. of catgut in particular'!

If, after the war, we remedy our shortcomings by cultivating more thoroughness, let us take care that we cultivate it with a good sense of proportion. American students, who—the best of them—are usually under strong German influence, are in my experience often wanting in this sense, devoting abnormally intense thoroughness to very small questions, and losing the stimulating charm of wider and more varied prospects.

But enough of these drawbacks. I owe too much to German thoroughness to wish to cavil at it; and it is a quality in which I myself am by nature and training deficient.

Two Ideal Schoolmasters

I once had the pleasure of bringing together two schoolmasters whom I had long thought of as ideally gifted for their work. They have now both passed away, and I am sometimes tempted to think that the type they represent is passing away too. They were classical men with literary tastes and no scientific training; one of them indeed was profoundly ignorant of science, a fact which he sadly and candidly acknowledged to his many scientific friends, who (if I am not mistaken) loved him all the better for it. But there is just now a loud call for the repression of classical and literary education. There is a definite claim on the part of scientific men that we should bring up our boys and girls in a scientific rather than a literary atmosphere. The idea is, I think, that we should place ourselves on a level with the Germans in the application of science and scientific methods to all social and economic problems; for when this war is over, we are told, we shall have to face a fresh course of elaborate preparation for our ruin. Thus the prospects of ideal schoolmasters like my two old

friends are not bright; and we who believe in the infinite value of that type cannot but feel depressed.

There can indeed be no doubt that after the war, even in our great public schools, which are somewhat strangely believed to be the homes of a lost cause, the masters will no longer be mainly of the old classical and literary type. There is no doubt that the teaching of science must be improved and reorganised, and made accessible to every boy, perhaps to every girl too. But all good teachers know very well, that science cannot, even if it would, root out the literary element in education; that is far more impossible than the destruction of Prussian militarism. It is impossible, because the literary instinct is inherent in human nature (as happily Prussianism is not), and has a mysterious power, quite unrivalled in educational subjects, of binding human souls together; for it touches secret chords of feeling to which science has no access.

I believe indeed with all my heart that in education it is the men and not the methods that really tell. Why then may not a teacher of mathematics or science have as good a chance of becoming a permanent treasure in the memories of his pupils as a classical teacher with a literary instinct? Let us hope that he may, for he is already one of a vast majority of educators. But I cannot but think that he will be at a disadvantage in this respect as compared with his literary colleague, unless indeed, as may well happen, as probably will happen, he in some way combines

the literary instinct with his scientific enthusiasm. Real education implies and postulates a real interest in human beings, and not only in those of this generation, but in all that human nature has thought and recorded about itself since literature began. My experience, such as it has been, suggests to me that the study and the love of humanity, in the written and spoken word of the past as well as in living human beings, is the best of all qualifications for an educator, a precious talisman in all his work.

And I feel sure that the peculiar power and charm of my two friends was due in the main to their life-long interest in humanity. Each had an individuality of his own which I always associate with this instinctive interest, rather than with any special knowledge they possessed, or with any methods they adopted. The younger, who was the first to leave us, was in his earlier days not only unmethodical, but untidy, irregular, unpunctual: a late sitter-up, an inveterate smoker: a delightful and indefatigable talker, with a marvellous memory for quotations and stories: quick to take offence, and apt to speak cuttingly if offended. As he grew older, the genius for friendship which, innate itself, had been nursed all through his youth in an atmosphere of pure humanity, blossomed into an affection for all true-hearted boys and men, no matter what their attainments or their interests, which will make his memory dear to them as long as they live. If you ask one of them why it is so, he can only tell you that he knows he will never

again meet a man like that one. He cannot express in words the mysterious power that brings and binds human souls together. But he has certain choice books in his shelves, old ones probably, with affectionate inscriptions in a somewhat illegible hand; and he has certain choice quotations in his memory, well charged with wise counsel, to serve him as ballast in his voyage through life.

My other friend, lately departed in ripe old age, whose teaching, or rather education, I myself experienced, was of a different cast. He was methodical and exact, punctual and painstaking, slow to anger; angry I doubt if I ever saw him, but he could pain a boy by showing himself pained. Yet in spite of exactness and gentleness, what immense enthusiasm he put into all we did together! It was that enthusiasm, expressed often rather quaintly, and always quietly, that was the secret of his power of attracting young human souls. I remember him saying once to me, in sober earnest, with a delightful smile on his face, 'Do you know, I think that "Liddell and Scott" is almost the most interesting book I ever read.' The words were so audacious, so paradoxical for the ordinary run of us, that I have never forgotten them; but all he meant was that the big lexicon was feeding his enthusiasm for his work then going on. The result was that his book on Greek Syntax was the most interesting of its kind that I for one have ever read.

It was this enthusiasm that made himself a happy

man, and made happy all his relations with the boys. Nay, his first enthusiasm was for the boys, and for the best of them it remained as friendship all his life. Indeed, every boy at that school had a claim to share in it, and, in one way or another, all who had ever been there.

The recollections on which I can dwell with peculiar affection are those of Shakespeare readings in his room, with introductory tea. And we did not confine ourselves to Shakespeare; we read, so it seems to me, almost everything there was to read in English poetry of an imaginative and inspiring kind. Then he had an ingenious way of keeping up our interest and bringing out our tastes. Once he asked us each to bring a poem, such as we liked well, and to read it aloud. I remember perfectly well the lines of Coleridge that I chose, and have just been looking at them again.

In games, in soldiering, in natural history, he carried us on by this individual enthusiasm of his: each pursuit as it came up becoming for him a kind of romance as well as a duty. But of these I will say nothing; it was his delight in the written and the spoken word that had the vital charm for most of us, a delight never divorced from his daily work with us, but passing by inevitable transition from the rich humanity of the great minds of the past into the young unripe humanity of the boys around him.

Many old pupils of both these educators have fought, and some have fallen in this war. I am sure

that not one of them could ever become hard, gross, or cruel. Those who have once learnt to be gentle and generous by close contact with a noble soul, can never fail to be

> 'More pure
> As tempted more: more able to endure,
> As more exposed to suffering and distress:
> Thence also more alive to tenderness.'

FEBRUARY 27TH.

'Coming to Life' in Fiction

I have had ample confirmation in these trying times of my old experience about novels: that they entirely fail to distract my attention and relieve my cares, unless two or three at least of the characters are *alive*. Some of these creatures of the imagination are so wonderfully endowed with life, that it takes me an effort to recognise that they never really walked about on this earth. And sometimes the incidents in their lives are so real, that it takes me another effort to believe that they never really happened. When at Lyme Regis once, I went out on the Cobb, which has just enough slope downwards to the sea to make one attend to one's footing: and meeting a fisherman, I casually asked him whether they ever had an accident there. 'Never,' he replied: whereon I found myself on the verge of reminding him of that mishap which all readers of English fiction know. The sudden discovery that it did not really happen gave me something like a shock. Surely there is some philosophy of Being to prove these things as true as anything that actually happens!

What does this experience mean? I ask myself this question, when I find another of my old friends in fiction as fully alive for me as ever, after a lapse perhaps of half a century or more.

Professor Raleigh, in his admirable book on Shakespeare, has given me some help in getting near an answer. The dramatist, he says, is often much put about by the necessity of keeping to his story 'when the characters have come alive and are pulling another way.' In 'Measure for Measure,' Barnadine, the drunken prisoner, ought to have been put to death, and is actually called forth to execution. But he suddenly comes alive, and so endears himself to his creator that his execution is felt to be impossible. Another way had to be found for the story, and Barnadine is pardoned at the end of the play.

Why Barnadine thus came to life in Shakespeare's hands is not, however, very clear, nor yet why some characters in novels have a vigorous life, while some only half live, and others never come to the birth at all. Let us grapple with the question a little more closely.

The characters in historical novels, in my experience, very rarely, if ever, come to life. Scott's historical romances produced no Jeanie Deans or Monkbarns or Dominie Sampson, or a score of other creatures of his fond imagination or idealised experience. And the reason is not difficult to find; in the historical tales it was his *intellectual imagina-*

tion that was at work, while in the others it was an imagination less intellectual and far more *sympathetic*. Even of 'Esmond,' as compared with 'Vanity Fair' or 'Pendennis,' this seems to me to be true; we know from his friend Trollope that 'Esmond' was, for its author, a great intellectual effort. So, too, with the 'Tale of Two Cities' and 'Romola.' These books are the work of an intellectual imagination, not indeed devoid of sympathy; but here the sympathetic element has lost so much of its electrical force under the intellectual stress that it cannot do its full work of life-giving. But when Scott, or Thackeray, or Dickens, were writing about their own day and the life that thrilled and pulsed all around them, the strong feeling of a finely-strung mind was allowed its full mettle, and the warm life that throbbed in the creator's brain passed on into the men and women of his creation. The innumerable host of second and third-rate novelists, though they depict the life of their own time, have no life-giving power, for want of sympathetic sensitiveness in their mental make. Their efforts are intellectual, more like those of the great novelists when they are treating historical subjects.

The life-giving power is nearly always shown when a character is first introduced by the author; and this proves that such characters have already been long alive in his brain. What says Beatrice when she first comes on the stage? 'I wonder that you will still be talking, Signor Benedick: nobody marks you.'

The answer adds yet more life: 'What, my dear Lady Disdain, are you still living?' Fielding was a life-giving wizard of the highest order: and he introduces Squire Western thus: 'It was the Squire's custom every afternoon, as soon as he was drunk, to hear his daughter play upon the harpsichord.' When Jane Austen began to write she was already in full possession of the mysterious power; for in 'Northanger Abbey,' the only one of her six novels which remains exactly as it was first written down, the artless Catharine Morland is so much alive in the first chapter that we realise at once how dearly Jane loved (and laughed at) this innocent girl, who must have been alive in her brain long before that chapter was written. So with the immortal Major Pendennis, who is intensely alive in the very first chapter; so, too, with Becky Sharp, when she flings (in the opening scene) the great Lexicographer's 'dixonary' out of the cab window, in defiance of Miss Pinkerton and all her absurdities. Trollope, though some few of his characters really live, has not this power of galvanising them into life at the first touch; probably because they were not fully alive in his brain when he began to write.

There is one remarkable instance of delay in vitalisation, familiar to all of us. Mr. Pickwick is not alive in his first chapter, nor indeed for some way on in the book; but before long an unrivalled sympathetic imagination began to work, and he becomes a human being; not one whom we have ever met, but

one in whom his creator has gathered up all that is innocent, impulsive, obstinate, generous, tender-hearted, ludicrous, in the life of English old-bachelorhood. The other Samuel, a simpler character but not less immortal, came to life at his first appearance, while cleaning boots in the early morning at the White Hart Inn, High Street, Borough.

Some novel-readers will no doubt tell me that the life led by these creations of Dickens is neither so real nor so important as to justify me in dwelling on them. I do not agree with these views; but in deference to them I will refrain from going on to Mrs. Gamp, though she is (so far as I know) the only character in fiction who is not only possessed of vitality herself, but also of an imaginative faculty capable of creating yet another being. Mrs. Harris, to the best of our belief, and Mrs. Prig's, never did exist at all; but the poetry of Mrs. Gamp's life has found its expression in her shadowy figure.

But whatever may be thought about his leading characters, there can be no doubt that Dickens is unrivalled in the sudden power of rapidly illuminating, by a flash of sympathetic imagination, a figure or a scene not essential to the story, which yet, as Professor Raleigh puts it, suddenly comes to life or light in the author's hands. A beautiful example both of scene and figure is in Sam Weller's brief conversation with the pathetic cobbler in the Fleet prison, which ends with slumber on Sam's part and a sigh on the cobbler's. Another, pathetic too, but

shot through with humour like all these scenes, is that of little David Copperfield being driven by Mr. Barkis to Yarmouth on his way to school. There is in this beautiful passage a touch of eighteenth century diction, and it is worth noting that at the end of the last chapter Dickens has been telling how David —that is, himself—used to read 'Peregrine Pickle' and the like in stolen moments in a garret. This is the passage:

'Having by this time cried as much as I possibly could, I began to think it was no use crying any more, especially as neither Roderick Random, nor that Captain in the Royal Navy, had ever cried, that I could remember, in trying situations. The carrier, *seeing me in this resolution*, proposed that my pocket handkerchief should be spread upon the horse's back to dry. I thanked him and assented; and particularly small it looked, under those circumstances.'

'Pure Saxon English'

The war has uprooted my gardener and swept him off for military training. In his place we have planted a stalwart boy, fresh from the school, hoping that he may grow up in our garden and bear good fruit. Henry's education is not complete, I need hardly say; but when he speaks to me he uses the ordinary 'good' English to which we are all accustomed. Yet a day or two ago he was overheard saying to his younger brother, who helps him with his work at times, 'Bist tha' going to help? If not, th' hadst best go home.'

Here is the pure Teutonic speech, such as a German might understand, even if he knew no English. It carries me back for fifty years to a time when it was the fashion in educated or half-educated circles to exult in being a Teuton and to despise the Celt and his tongue. The history of this curious Teutonism, which we have now almost too effectually abjured, would be an interesting subject for a lengthy essay, entitled 'The Discovery of Germany by Western Islanders.' The discoverers would be Coleridge and Carlyle, who pointed us to the litera-

ture and philosophy of Germany; Dr. Arnold, who openly professed his faith in the great future of the Teutonic race—including, of course, the Anglo-Saxons*; Kemble, who taught us, on German authority which has since been proved fallacious, that popular institutions began with the German people; Freeman, Stubbs, Green, and others of the mid-Victorian period, who were inspired by the marvellous military successes of Germany to preach the gospel of British Teutonism.

This is a long tale, and at the present moment I only wish to speak of one brief episode in it. I can well remember believing—though how I came by the belief I am not sure—that if you wrote poetry it was proper, as far as possible, to employ only words of Teutonic origin. We thought that they formed the best part of the English speech, and the *purest* part, though if asked why the purest, we might have found it hard to explain, especially as the word 'pure' is pure Latin. We fancied that Tennyson preferred this pure Saxon English, failing to observe that when he was at his very best he admits great Latin words with admirable effect:

> 'The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
> And murmur of innumerable bees.'

But there was one poet of that day who openly and professedly adopted the Teutonic doctrine; I mean William Barnes, the poet of the Dorset dialect.

* In the first of his *Lectures on Modern History*.

I heard this from his own lips when he came to Marlborough in 1865 to read us some of his poems. Barnes' dialect is indeed no study from the outside; it is his own native tongue, and his own true self flows into it. Like Burns, he could not write poetry in what he liked to call 'court English' with half the tender delicacy that he could put into his native speech—and that speech was, as he believed, almost entirely Teutonic.

Barnes was never swept out of Dorset into the great world of science, or he might have become a pioneer in the study of language. He remained stranded in his quiet county, and while firmly believing that he was a philologist, indulged his fancy by writing poems in his beloved native tongue. Time proved that these poems were the real work of his life, and that philology was only his amusement. But it is due to philology to allow that the idea of writing in dialect was first suggested to him by his studies of language. He discovered that the Dorset speech was a survival of the old Teutonic tongue of the West Saxons, and he believed, and the result has justified the belief, that he could preserve it in a literary form. Here are his own words:

'The Dorset dialect is a broad and bold shape of the English language, as the Doric was of the Greek. It is rich in humour, strong in raillery and hyperbole, and as fit a vehicle of rustic feeling and thought as the Doric is found in the idylls of Theocritus.' His daughter, who wrote his life, adds that he began to

write in dialect in a dream of restoring this ancient language and character to England; and that his first experiments convinced him that the simpler 'Saxon' English was not only more forcible, but more poetical, than our modern Latinised speech.

So far as his own poems illustrate this idea, he was by no means out of his reckoning; their individuality is mainly due to the purity, as he calls it, of the language. But in theory he went further than this, and missed his mark. As perfection in nationality consists in a fusion of races, so does perfection in language consist in a fusion of linguistic elements. Surely the several elements in our language, that great organ of many stops, will not fail in the future, as they have never failed in the past, to sound in perfect harmony the various tones and moods for which they may be called on by our national experience.

In prose, of course, we cannot possibly dispense with the Latin element in our language, nor indeed with the Greek element, which is considerable; both have been absorbed by a natural process into the very fibre of our wonderful speech. It is curious that Barnes himself, though he tried to ride his hobby into the realm of prose, among the few words which I quoted just now, used five of Latin origin and no less than three of Greek. Again, he proposed to find pure Saxon substitutes for many of our modern words of non-Teutonic origin; but among them all I can only recollect one happy suggestion—the sub-

stitution of 'sun-print' for the Greek word photograph. Had he been born in Germany he might have had some backing for his views, for there the Teutonic tongue has never succeeded in absorbing foreign words without an awkward effort reminding us that they are foreign. But we in Britain never stop to consider whence the materials of our rich speech have been drawn. The Latin element, which Barnes so strangely despised, is and always has been supremely useful and valuable in two departments far removed from each other—in scientific and learned works, and in the poetry of sublime imagery or of deep feeling. And the fusion of all the elements in one organic growth seems now as natural and complete as possible.

But whether in prose or verse, it is always to the Teutonic element that we naturally appeal when we are writing quietly of the country, of common folk, or of simple thoughts and feelings. The lyrical poetry of the nineteenth century took this turn, not from any conscious reaction against the Latinised English of a prosaic age, but from an unconscious perception of the fitness of things in language. Shelley, Wordsworth, Tennyson, all show this tendency, and especially the last, though no poet knew better the value of the Latin element in English. But this is exactly what Barnes did not understand: he looked on English as a mongrel tongue, and wished to make it once more a 'pure' one—a delusion into which he would never have been enticed if he had had the

blessing of a real education. Yet in practice he knew his own instrument, and used it with consummate skill. I do not pretend to understand all the delicacies and resources of Dorset speech, but I can see how admirably it suits the poet's purpose, and the character of his land and folk. It is a soft southern tongue, utterly different from that of Burns, and made smoothly melodious by broad vocal sounds: a perfect vehicle of homely emotions, light humour, tender thoughts. Beyond the range of such thoughts and feelings Barnes' muse never ventured: within that range his work is beyond criticism.

Absolute simplicity, touching tenderness, tranquil gaiety—these are, I think, the leading characteristics of his poems, and we find one or other, or all three combined, in almost every one of them. Of the first two of these qualities, the famous poem 'Woak Hill' is a striking example, and as this was admitted by Palgrave to the second part of the 'Golden Treasury,' everyone can refer to it. But you may open the volume of collected poems at almost any place and find much the same quality: here, for example, on the first page I lay open is one called 'Bad News,' which will touch many hearts to-day:—

'I do mind when there broke bitter tidens,
Woone day, on their ears,
And their souls were asmote wi' a stroke
As the lightnen do vall on the woak,
And the things that were bright all around 'em
Seem'd dim drough their tears.

'Then unheeded were things in their vingers,
Their grief were their all.
All unheeded were zongs o' the birds,
All unheeded the child's perty words,
All unheeded the kitten a rollen
The white-threaded ball.

March 18th.

A Shakespearean Problem

By the word problem I do not mean what the Germans call a 'Frage'—an intellectual football which, when thrown into touch, is seized on, run away with, kicked, and battered, by a host of professors and their myrmidons, until it is tumbled out of touch again, perchance, for a few happy years. No; I mean no question of Shakespearian learning, no whetstone for intellectual weapons. The problem for me yesterday was a much more difficult one than such as these. The duty was laid on me of trying to make the elder schoolchildren in this village understand who Shakespeare was, and why all nations think of him as among the first of men, if not the very first of all. I made a few notes, and took with me two tiny fragments to read aloud. I did not keep them much more than half an hour, and during that time I saw no sign of listlessness. I have since heard that one small boy, distinguished for his naughtiness, complained that I stopped too soon; but it may have been because the half hour was for him an idle one. It is possible, I hope, that some of these young ones will not entirely forget what I told them about the great hero of our countryside.

It was happy for me that Stratford is but twenty miles away, a good day's walk (I told them) or a morning's cycle-ride. Relations of Shakespeare's lived in the charming village of Barton-on-the-Heath, only six miles distant,—the home of old Sly in a famous Induction. I tried to make them feel that he really belonged to us, looked up at our hills from the Avon valley, spoke the same speech as our folk. To 'fall *off of* a tree' is not now correct school English, but when our children say this out of school, they are saying what Shakespeare and his friends said three hundred years ago (Second part of *Henry VI.* Act II, Scene I). For he was neither nobleman nor gentleman, but a man of the people; he came of a family of small farmers, like Mr Cook beyond the allotments yonder, and his father ran a variety of small trades, like our friend Mr Eaton; yet of this man, who grew up in these common ways of life, the President of the United States could say the other day in a message to our people, 'I join in unqualified admiration of the great genius who spoke the human spirit in fuller measure and truer tones than any other man of any race or any age.' His memory and his work have so ennobled the little country town where he spent his earliest and his latest days, that another distinguished American spoke of it the other day as *the most famous town in the world.* How could these things be? What was the secret of the man and his work?

Evading this question for a moment, I told them

of the school at Stratford, which is still just as it was in his time, and where he could find his place in the big schoolroom without difficulty to-day. How little we know of what he learnt there! Far more we know of what he must have learnt with eyes and ears out of doors. I think the children were pleased to hear that in those boyish days he must have taught himself a great deal about birds and plants and horses, and of all kinds of country sports, fishing, coursing, hunting, hawking: much too of country life of all kinds, of country folks and their speech, the milkmaid, the pedlar, the shepherd, the parson, the squire: of soldiers and recruiting, of schoolboys and their masters. All life must have been a joy to him, and what we find a deep and lasting joy we never forget; it becomes part of ourselves, and helps to form our character. I believe it was through this early love for the sweet country life around him, which has left its fragrance in all his work, that his friends came to think of him as the *gentle* Shakespeare. There could be nothing harsh about him, if he loved and enjoyed all beautiful living things.

But then I had to tell them that when the lad was about nineteen the clouds began to settle on his life. His father got into debt, he himself into trouble for poaching; and then too he married unwisely a woman some years older than himself. (Her name, Hathaway, was well known here at Kingham at one time). The family fell from its good position in the

town, and William, the eldest son, would stay at home no longer. Somehow he found his way to London, but neither of that journey, nor of his first years in London, could I tell them anything; it is all gone, never to be recovered. We only know that he found employment at a London theatre, in some humble capacity no doubt, and that by degrees he began to act in plays and then to write them for the actors. Luckily this lost part of the story would have interested my young hearers less than the rest. I was content to tell them how at last he came back to Stratford a well-to-do man, how he put the family on its feet again, and lived a part of each year with his wife, like a good citizen; and how he bought himself the best house in the town, with a garden large enough for all his purposes, and large enough, too, to be now a public resort for the people of Stratford, and for innumerable visitors from all quarters of the globe. It was in this garden, I told them, that in September, 1887, at the end of that glorious sunny summer, I finished my reading of all his plays and poems, to which I had devoted a long and happy holiday.

From the garden of New Place I took them in imagination to the beautiful church, and showed them his grave in the chancel, with the monument looking down on it, and the inscription said to be of his own writing:

> 'Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbeare
> To dig the dust enclosed heare:

Blest be the man that spares these stones,
And curst be he that moves my bones.'

So far all was well; there was no sign of inattention. But now came the unavoidable difficulty,—how to make my young ones feel what Shakespeare did to be called the greatest of Englishmen. Yet it was not quite a hopeless task. The 'children' were many of them well grown and intelligent, especially the girls; the boys were smaller, for they go off now to work in the fields the moment they can get their license. But very few are dull, and some have bright eyes full of mind, which had been fixed on me with some interest so far.

'If you go out,' I told them, 'into a cloudless starlight night, and look up at the sky, you will see millions of stars, all, at the first glance, of much the same brightness. But in a moment your eye catches a star shining and twinkling with a stronger light than the rest, and this one fixes your attention, insists on your looking at it, overcoming with his brilliancy the brightness of the stars around him. So too, if you were to go out into the wide world, travelling among millions of your fellow men and women, you would find most of them good ordinary folks, with nothing special about them to make you remember them afterwards. But once and again you may meet with one whose look, whose talk, you can never forget: who shines, like that brilliant star, with an inward fire. To such a man God has given

something altogether beyond the gifts of us ordinary mortals: something which cannot be explained, yet can in some measure be understood, if we think of it as an inward fire that shines in his eyes and gives life and warmth to all he says. In him life seems to be ten times as strong and fresh and full as in the common human being. He sees everything as he walks through the world: nothing escapes him, he loves and cherishes everything, for its beauty, or its gaiety, or its happiness, or even its sadness.

Such a bright particular star was Shakespeare, and though he has been dead three hundred years to-day, we have proof of this, we know it for a fact. For he left behind him nearly forty plays (besides much other poetry) all of which we can buy cheap to-day, most of which are still acted on the stage in his own and other countries, and have been translated into all the great languages of the world. It is in these plays that we can still see that bright star shining, lighting up all kinds of human life, high and low, rich and poor, clever and stupid, good and bad. Though the people in his plays are three hundred years old, they are still our friends and neighbours of to-day, for the touch of Shakespeare's magic wand has given them perpetual life, and the world thinks and talks of them just as if they were still walking about among us.'

Of the beauty, the richness, the originality, the force of the language of the plays, I could not talk to my youthful audience, nor of the wealth of thought which so often in the later plays seems to crush the

language all out of shape. But I read them, twice over very slowly, six lines of poetry and six of prose.

> 'Fear no more the heat o' the sun
> Nor the furious winter's rages:
> Thou thy worldly task hast done,
> Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages.
> Golden lads and girls all must,
> Like chimney-sweepers, come to dust.'

I think some of them understood that life is here compared to a day's work, the worker at the close of day, whatsoever his degree of life, receiving his wage and going home to his rest.

> 'What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!'

On this I made no comment; trusting to the extraordinary beauty of the rhythm, and the mental fire burning behind every word, to make them recognise the inspiration. I can only let myself fancy that some one or two may have so recognised it, and will not forget that half-hour.

May 8th.

Hope, Ancient and Modern

In a most inspiring essay on 'Hope temporal and eternal,'* the Dean of St. Paul's remarks on the contrast between Hope in the early Christian writers, and the literary presentation of Hope in pre-Christian times. What had been a trap for the unwary, enticing them into a cynical temper, became a virtue and duty among the Christians. The Dean seems to admonish us in these depressing times to take the Christian view of Hope and not the heathen one.

The importance of Hope for all of us has indeed been great, since we awoke more than a year ago to the extreme peril of Europe. For the enemy there has been no need of her aid, for he has heard of nothing but continued victory. His Hope has been Confidence, *fides* not *spes*; for him doubt has never given birth to Hope. But the Allies, struggling constantly with the tremendous weight of organised material, which is the chief engine of German success, knowing their own weaknesses, despised by the enemy, sometimes divided among themselves, have had as much need of Hope as any great cause in History.

* 'The Faith and the War,' Essay V.

That we should not think of Hope cynically is indeed devoutly to be wished. But I think the Dean hardly does justice to the pre-Christian peoples when he charges them in general terms with such cynicism. This is what he says:

'It is remarkable how completely the Christian writers discard the cynical and pessimistic language about Hope which is common in classical literature. It is a moot point whether the Hope which was left at the bottom of Pandora's box was meant by the inventor of the tale to be a good thing or an evil. But the deceitfulness of Hope is almost a commonplace of classical writers. Hope and Chance are demons who sport with men till death liberates them.'

The Dean goes on to explain very beautifully what Christian Hope is; it may be summed up simply as 'trust in God.' It is thus in most striking contrast with the pre-Christian idea of Hope as he has just explained it. But for the Romans at least I cannot accept that explanation; I have satisfied myself that they did not think even of Chance as a demon sporting with them until the very end of their republican period; they were too sturdy and virile a people to surrender themselves as slaves to a wanton power. And at no time in their history, so far as I can discover, did they think of Hope as wanton and deceptive. True, you may find passages in Roman literature, as in any literature, and here and there a sepulchral inscription taken from the

Greek, in which Hope is spoken of with some distrust; but in the early and healthy literature of Rome such passages are absent or rare.

What do we mean by Hope? Surely it is the expectation of good in uncertainty, the power of looking forward cheerfully to the fulfilment of our fond desires. Now if this is what the Romans meant by their ancient word Spes, as I am sure it was, it is incredible that so healthy and prosperous a people should speedily have set about treating such an idea with cynicism and contempt. But they did *not* so treat it; or if ever tempted to do so, were tempted by Greek cynicism, the result of a long career of decadence and disappointment.

On the contrary, Hope, like Fortuna, became for the Roman a kind of deity, and the transition is a most interesting one. There was some mysterious feeling that she was not merely a mood or quality of the human mind, but something external and independently powerful. In the Roman poets we find her appealed to by the husbandman, the invalid, the lover, the sailor, the prisoner, and the soldier in battle. It is not astonishing then that we should find her established firmly in a temple, as a power to be worshipped, after the great struggle between Rome and Carthage had been going on for some years with ever doubtful issue.

To us this may seem the strangest thing that has ever happened to the idea of Hope. There has been much learned dissertation about these 'deifica-

tions,' but it is not really difficult to explain them. When the Romans set up a religious cult of any thing, man, or idea, they did not perhaps so definitely mean that they were creating new gods, as that they were deeming certain men or products of the human mind worthy of divine honours. They felt a desire to speak of the object in terms of divinity, and to act towards it as to a being capable of giving mysterious help. This was a native Roman habit of mind, which, with the arrival from Greece of beautiful artistic types, representing these objects, became ever more apt to look on them as real divinities.

I do not find that the Romans, holding Hope thus worthy of worship as a divine being, ever turned and rent her; not even in the terrible stress of the invasion of Italy by Hannibal, or in the agonies of civil war long afterwards. She was for them good, or holy (*bona, sancta*), or *augusta*, as being specially invoked for the happy upbringing of the young members of the family of Augustus and his successors.

I think then that this Roman idea of Hope was not so far removed from the Hope of which we ourselves are now so keenly feeling the need: the Hope which Wordsworth calls

> 'the paramount duty that Heaven lays
> For its own honour, on Man's suffering heart.'

That same poet, who has been of value to many of us lately, did indeed know of a Hope 'that is unwilling to be fed'; but when we have finished that poem about the Leech-gatherer, we have forgotten that

Hope and found a better one. So too Shakespeare, in a noble speech* put into the mouth of Agamemnon, begins by reminding us that

> 'The ample preparation that hope makes
> In all designs begun on earth below,
> Fails in the promised largeness.'

But by the time we have read to the end of the speech, we find our very checks and disasters making us more confident and hopeful. It is not often that we think of Shakespeare and St Paul at the same moment; but the Apostle means just the same when he says that 'tribulation makes us patient, patience brings us experience, and experience brings us Hope, —and Hope secures us against shame.' The next words do indeed carry us further, and show us Hope hallowed by the close and inspiring companionship of Faith and Love. Then she becomes, as for Milton, a 'hovering Angel girt with golden wings.'

There is in the air of Europe, this middle week of March, some more perceptible feeling of Hope than there has been for many months. And just at this time the bitter winds and snowstorms of the last few weeks are gradually giving way to more genial airs. As I write this, I can see one long streak of snow on a hill-side, the remains of a deep drift; but in the meadows and hedgerows the golden celandines are peeping out whenever the sun gives them the least encouragement to hope for spring.

* *Troilus and Cressida*, Act I, Scene 3. My attention was drawn to this grand speech by my friend, Mr. J. W. Mackail.

They bid me think of a spring that may be coming soon, that must be coming ere long, when devastated Europe may not only put on her natural vesture of crop and sward, but feel once more the warmth of the Sun of righteousness bidding her be of good cheer.

'O soldats morts pour la patrie, il renaîtra le printemps de France avec ses fleurs idéales qui vous ont enivrés jusqu' à mourir, il renaîtra, et nous le ferons s'épanouir sur toute la face de la terre.'

These words, full of hope for all their sadness, concluded the speech of the French Minister of Education at a meeting on March 6 in aid of the hospital established in the École Normale de Paris.

March 16th.

The Sower

Our spring sowing, chiefly of barley, is near at hand. He who watches the seed trickling out of the drill in two tiny streams, will notice that practically none of it can be lost; all finds good ground, for the drill-driver will not waste it elsewhere. It need not necessarily call to memory the parable of parables, as it must so often have done in the days when the seed was scattered by the hand, caught perchance by the March wind, and so carried to the adjacent road or some other hard ground. To realise that story in satisfying detail, we must go further than the English barley-field. In that delightful book, 'Sinai and Palestine' (now to be had for a shilling, thanks to Mr John Murray), Dean Stanley describes what he saw as he rode along the track by the hillside, on his way to the plain of Gennesaret. 'There was the undulating cornfield descending to the water's edge: there was the trodden pathway running through the midst of it... There was the good rich soil, which, when there is no interruption, produces one vast mass of corn. There was the rocky ground of the hillside protruding here and there through the cornfields.

There were large bushes of thorn, springing up in the very midst of the waving wheat.'

This wonderful story, so short, so simple, so incisive, of which it is impossible that anyone should ever weary, has been frequently in my mind this past winter, together with its fellow the parable of the tares. As a farmer, surveying a field, finds a sudden growth of mischievous plants, partly the result of his own neglect, partly of atmospheric conditions over which he has had no control, so we, looking over Europe, see such a tangle of poisonous weeds as has not been found there since the Thirty Years War,—perhaps not since the age of barbarian invasion. It may fairly be doubted whether even Goths and Vandals, Huns, Arabs, or Turks, brought such misery and sorrow upon Europe as it has endured for a year and more, and is likely to endure for yet another year. And the bitterness of it, for many of us at least, lies in the fact that this misery is mainly due to the extraordinary intellectual activity of a nation to which we used to look up, in intellectual matters at least, with an almost exaggerated reverence. But still more it is due,—and this is what is so bitter for philosophers and theologians—to the unquestionable fact that the German military government has claimed, in theory and in practice, to dispense with the moral law. To quote the King's speech of two days ago, they 'mistake force for right, and expediency for honour.' The Poet Laureate puts it still more strongly in the preface to his recently published 'Spirit of Man':

'Prussia's scheme,' he says, 'to destroy her neighbours, was long-laid, and she will shrink from no crime that may further its execution.'

The qualities of pity and mercy are spurned as weaknesses. For chivalry and generosity, the feeling that makes men gentle and generous, I cannot find that the Prussians have ever been conspicuous, and they have imposed their ethical code upon the rest of Germany. Even our English-hating Major Frye found the Prussians more wantonly cruel than any other people after 1815. We might fancy that their 'Kultur' should have softened them: but that Kultur does not touch the springs of conduct and feeling,—it is a force acting from without that does not reach the heart. It has acted on their wills, but by way of paralysis; drilling them into a Germanism which they seem to take for a new system of ethics, in which truth, justice, mercy, and kindness, have no place.

The power of the Prussian drill has extended from the barrack-yard to the school and the University. To appreciate the strength of its grip on the human will the best way is to watch it actually going on in the barrack-yard. Under the shadow of the great Roman Basilica at Trier I have seen recruits *being taught the goose-step and patriotic songs at one and the same time*. Even in the eighteenth century Dr. Burney was struck with the will-destroying character of this drill. 'The soldiers seem disciplined into clockwork. I never saw such mechanical exactness

in animated beings. One would suppose that the author of "Man a Machine" had taken his idea from these men.' I fondly hope that if we in England are to have universal service, we shall remember that there is a bad side in all drilling operations as well as a good one.

The nineteenth century, we fondly fancied, was full of promise. Germany and Italy became united nations, France was finding her better self, Russia was taking great strides in civilisation, Slavery was abolished all over the world. We in England seemed to be shaking off old class prejudices, and tardily beginning to recognise our duties to our huge industrial population. Christianity seemed in process of enlightenment and enrichment. But now there is desolation and destruction, and the famine and the sword. On one side there is an unnatural hatred, on the other a hopeless distrust. Thus many feel that the very air we breathe in Europe has 'gone bad,' and is unfit to support a healthy life. Humanity seems to be rotting; and hence depression of a most ruinous kind.

For to have to distrust,—to use no harsher word—a people that has such fine qualities as the German, one that has done so much valuable work in the world, is surely bad enough; but to lose confidence in the will and the working of a Higher Power is far worse, and of such a calamity there is just now a very serious danger. To counteract a tendency so lamentable, a volume has lately appeared, containing

essays on various aspects of 'the Faith and the War,' by several wise and able men, philosophers, theologians, and historians: beyond doubt a helpful and stimulating collection.

Yet the ordinary Briton, who in these trying times has not the leisure to think, even if he were apt to do so, may do well to recur to that divine story with which I began this paper. The Sower is he who in any way, in any sense, promotes the will of God and the goodness of Man. But all such teachers, rulers, workers, are liable to be thwarted in their endeavours: much that they do is thrown away: some is lost at once, some after a while, some only because Man is weak and perverse. But there is yet always a large and valid remainder with a principle of life inherent in it: and this provides not only the spiritual sustenance needed for the time, but a continuity of that sustenance for the generations to come. The seed-corn is even more valuable than that which is to be consumed in the current year. So too the continuity of Good in the world, securing us the means of pushing ever further in the right way, is of more vital and perennial value than the Good which we can see with our eyes and minds in our own day. And if we take the Sower to mean, not only the human agent of the Divine Will, but that Divine Will itself,—as surely we may,—we may find a cheering solution of the difficulties now apt to perplex us.

The most ancient agricultural peoples believed profoundly in the continuity of life in their corn,

and expressed that belief in their religious ritual. The Hebrews believed also in the continuity of Good in the universe, and expressed that belief again and again in their literature, as for example in one of the most beautiful of their poems: 'the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children.'

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